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Council for Quality Assurance in
General and Further Education and Training

Predictability of the National Senior Certificate Examinations History Report DBE & IEB

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General and Further Education and Training

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ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
IEB	Independent Examinations Board
MCQ	Multiple Choice Question
NSC	National Senior Certificate
SACAI	South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute
SAGs	Subject Assessment Guidelines

Section 1: Overview of the Subject

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) defines History as the study of change and development in society over time. Central to this definition is the understanding that past human actions shape present realities and influence future possibilities. History is therefore not merely a record of past events but a disciplined process of inquiry that investigates how and why change occurs, examines its consequences, and explores how narratives about the past are constructed and interpreted.

At its core, History, as articulated in the CAPS, is a methodological discipline grounded in critical inquiry. It requires learners to ask questions such as: *What happened? When did it happen? Why did it happen at that particular time? What were the short-term and long-term consequences?* This process highlights the interpretative nature of the subject. History is not synonymous with the past itself; rather, it is the reconstruction and interpretation of the past through the critical analysis of historical sources and evidence. Evidence emerges when written, oral, visual, and material sources are interrogated to answer historical questions. Consequently, learners are expected not only to acquire knowledge but also to evaluate the reliability, validity, bias, and perspective embedded in historical accounts.

A foundational principle within the CAPS framework is multi-perspectivity. Historical understanding requires recognition that events can be interpreted differently depending on social position, historical context, and historiographical perspective. Interpretations may vary according to race, class, gender, ethnicity, or political affiliation, both in the historical period under study and in contemporary scholarship. By foregrounding multiple perspectives, History education challenges singular or dominant narratives and promotes a more inclusive understanding of the experiences of ordinary people alongside those of political leaders and other influential figures.

The concepts of cause and effect, together with change and continuity, provide the analytical framework for historical reasoning. Examining causes and consequences requires learners to identify the complex interplay of factors shaping historical events and to evaluate their immediate and long-term effects. Similarly, the study of change and continuity enables learners to distinguish between transformation and

persistence across different historical periods. Comparative approaches, including identifying similarities and differences and exploring relationships between the past and the present, further help learners connect historical developments to contemporary issues.

Time and chronology form the structural foundation of historical study. Historical events are organised within a chronological framework, requiring learners to situate events accurately within broader historical timelines. Chronological understanding enables learners to identify patterns, developments, and turning points across local, regional, national, continental, and global contexts.

Beyond its academic purpose, the CAPS positions History as a subject that contributes to democratic citizenship. It promotes the constitutional values of human rights, equality, social justice, democracy, and peace while encouraging civic responsibility and ethical leadership. By challenging prejudice based on race, class, gender, ethnicity, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination, History education fosters critical, informed, and engaged citizens who are equipped to participate constructively in a democratic society.

The CAPS identifies four specific aims for the teaching and learning of History. These are to stimulate interest in and enjoyment of the study of the past; to develop knowledge and understanding of historical events, processes, and forces; to cultivate the skills required for historical inquiry; and to deepen learners' understanding of key historical concepts, including the interpretation of sources and evidence. These aims are reflected in both the DBE and the IEB assessment frameworks, which evaluate not only factual knowledge but also source-based analysis, interpretation, argumentation, and extended historical writing.

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the predictability of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Independent Examinations Board (IEB) History examination papers administered between 2022 and 2024. The findings are presented by examinable topic in accordance with the CAPS and the IEB Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAGs). The report also provides topic-specific recommendations for the DBE and the IEB, respectively.

Section 2: Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research design using document analysis to examine the predictability of DBE and IEB examination papers administered between 2022 and 2024. Document analysis was considered appropriate because the study relied on existing examination papers and marking memoranda, thereby enabling the subject expert to systematically interpret and evaluate these documents.

Purposive sampling was used to select ten high-enrolment subjects offered by the DBE and IEB. The South African Comprehensive Assessment Institute (SACAI) was excluded from the study because its examination guidelines closely align with those of the DBE. History was selected as one of the high-enrolment subjects.

Data were collected by a single subject expert who analysed all relevant examination papers over the three-year period using evaluation instruments grounded in the principles of content and construct validity. The conceptual framework underpinning this study is discussed in detail in the *NSC Predictability Overview Report*. The subject expert examined each examination item, compared trends across the three years, and assessed the alignment of the examination with the CAPS and Abridged CAPS topics. A structured Microsoft Word-based instrument, comprising tables and thematic questions, guided the analysis of topic coverage, question types, cognitive skills assessed, and mark allocation. This approach enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the predictability of the examination papers. The thematic questions used in the evaluation are discussed in detail in the *NSC Predictability Overview Report*.

Section 3: Findings from the Evaluation of the DBE and IEB Question Papers

This chapter presents the findings of the evaluation of the DBE and IEB National Senior Certificate (NSC) History Question Paper 1 and Paper 2. The findings are based on a systematic analysis of examination papers administered between 2022 and 2024 and provide an overview of patterns related to examination predictability.

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate whether the upward trend observed in learner performance in NSC examinations reflects genuine improvements in learner competence or whether it may, in part, be attributed to increasing levels of predictability in examination design. By analysing selected subjects over three consecutive examination cycles, the study sought to generate evidence-based insights to strengthen Umalusi's quality assurance and standardisation processes. In doing so, the study contributes to broader scholarly discourse on the validity, fairness and integrity of high-stakes examination systems.

The findings are presented separately for the DBE and the IEB in Sections IIIA and IIIB, respectively, and for each question paper. The analysis is organised according to the thematic questions in the evaluation instrument, which are discussed in detail in the research design section of the *NSC Predictability Overview Report*.

For each examinable topic, the findings are summarised in tabular form and accompanied by a discussion based on six themes: topic coverage, content coverage by subtopic, topic weighting, item types by subtopic, subtopic–skill pairing, and scenario–subtopic–skill pairing. The analysis of these themes is presented in Sections a to f for each table. It evaluates the extent to which the components reflected in each table may have contributed to the predictability of the topics assessed in the History Paper 1 and Paper 2 examinations between 2022 and 2024.

Before presenting the findings, each theme is defined in Sections a–f below. These definitions apply to the analysis of both Paper 1 and Paper 2 across the two assessment bodies.

a. Topic coverage

The topics prescribed for examination of the NSC subjects are outlined in Section 4 of the CAPS or the Abridged CAPS. These guidelines help ensure alignment between the examination and the intended curriculum. The analysis of topic coverage focused on the frequency with which each topic was examined over the three years, specifically identifying any emerging patterns that may have contributed to the predictability of topic selection.

b. Content coverage

This section examined the extent to which specific content areas or subtopics within the selected topic have been assessed over three years. By analysing the frequency and repetition of subtopics in the examination question papers, the aim was to determine whether any patterns of content selection have emerged that may contribute to the predictability of the question paper.

c. Weighting of the topic

This section examined the distribution of the mark allocation (weighting) for the selected topic over three years. By analysing whether the marks allocated to this topic have remained consistent, increased, or decreased across examination cycles, the aim was to determine the extent to which predictable emphasis may have emerged.

d. Variation in item types

To evaluate the extent to which question design contributed to the predictability of examination papers, it was essential to examine how specific item types have been used to assess a given topic over time. This included analysing the variety of item types employed (such as Multiple Choice Questions [MCQ], essays, calculations, and practical scenarios), the distribution of marks allocated to each type, and how difficulty levels and cognitive demands have varied across types. Additionally, the use of command words, terms that guide the expected cognitive response, can influence question predictability. This section examined these dimensions over three years to identify patterns that may signal repetition or predictability.

e. Topic and skill pairing

To evaluate the predictability of examination question papers, it was crucial to examine how specific cognitive skills have been paired with particular topics over time. Consistent assessment of the same skills, such as interpretation, calculation, analysis, or explanation, when linked to a specific topic across multiple years, may signal a recurring pattern, potentially leading to predictability. Conversely, variation in skill pairing can help ensure a more comprehensive assessment of the intended learning outcomes. This section explored the extent to which skill demands associated with this topic have remained consistent or varied across the past three years and determined whether such patterns suggest predictability in assessment design.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

Some examination questions use scenarios, visual stimuli, or real-life contexts to test skills within a given topic. The variety or repetition of such contexts over multiple years can influence the anticipation of the nature of questions. Consistent use of similar scenarios may contribute to predictability, whereas diverse and novel contexts encourage more profound understanding and critical thinking. This section explored how the contextual framing of questions for each topic has evolved over the past three years and sought to determine whether predictability patterns existed.

3.1: HISTORY PAPER 1

This section presents an analysis of the final examination question papers from 2022 to 2024 for History Paper 1 topics. The findings for each topic are summarised in Tables 3.1.1–3.1.6.

Table 3.1.1 below summarises the analysis conducted to assess the level of predictability of the Cold War (1945–1990) topic in the DBE History Paper 1 examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.1.1: Findings on the Predictability of the Cold War (1945–1990) for the DBE History Paper 1 Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic 1: The Cold War (1945–1990)							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**
2022	✓	1. The Origins of the Cold War; Superpower rivalry between		1. Source-based questions: Short items (1–4 marks	1. Source- based question: L1–L3	1. The Origins of the Cold War Source-based questions:	Source interpretation, comparison, explanation

		the USA and USSR		each), Paragraph question = 8		L1–L3	of concepts, extraction, limitation of sources, and selection of information
		Truman Doctrine = 50		(50 marks for Overall SBQ)			
		1. The Extension of the Cold War: Vietnam = 50	100	2. Essay Questions = 50	1. Essay Question L3–L4	2. Vietnam War Essay Question L3	Presentation of content, application of the PEEL Method, sustained line of argument
2023	✓	1. The Origins of the Cold War; Superpower rivalry between the USA and	100	1. Source-based questions: Short items (1–4 marks each), Paragraph question = 8	L1–L3	1. The Origins of the Cold War Source-based question: L1–L3	Source interpretation, comparison, explanation of concepts,

		USSR; Berlin Blockade = 50		(50 marks for Overall SBQ)			extraction and selection of information
		The Extension of the Cold War: Vietnam = 50		2. Essay Questions = 50	L3–L4	2. Vietnam War Essay Question L3	Presentation of content, application of the PEEL Method, sustained line of argument
2024	✓	1. The Origins of the Cold War; Superpower rivalry between the USA and USSR; Berlin Blockade = 50	100	1. Source-based questions: Short items (1–4 marks each), Paragraph question = 8 (50 marks for Overall BQ)	L1–L3	1. The Origins of the Cold War Source-based questions: L1–L3	Source interpretation, comparison, explanation of concepts, extraction and selection of information

		The Extension of the Cold War: Vietnam = 50		2. Essay Questions = 50	L3–L4	2. Vietnam War Essay Question L3	Presentation of content, application of the PEEL Method, sustained line of argument

Table 3.1.1 presents a comparative overview of the Cold War (1945–1990) topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.1.1 have contributed to the predictability of the DBE History Paper 1 final examination from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that the Cold War topic recurred in all three NSC final examination papers (2022 to 2024) in both Section A (source-based question) and Section B (essay) formats. This aligns with the CAPS requirement that the topic "examines the origins and nature of the Cold War and its impact on global relations." Its constant inclusion aligns with the CAPS requirements, which stipulate that this content must be covered and examined as a key focus area in Grade 12. The frequency of its appearance across the three-year period demonstrates a predictable pattern in topic coverage. This predictability, however, is largely acceptable, as it reflects adherence to the CAPS mandate rather than an over-reliance on repetitive questioning. To prevent narrow repetition, DBE should rotate subtopics (e.g., include the Non-Aligned Movement or the Arms Race) and vary cognitive demand (L1–L3). Where predictability remains within CAPS expectations, it is considered educationally sound, as it supports fairness and curriculum alignment.

Thus, the assessment bodies should maintain this stability while ensuring a balanced representation of global and regional Cold War dimensions in both the source-based and essay components.

b. Content coverage

The findings indicate that this topic explored the origins of the Cold War, the nature of superpower rivalry, and its impact on the world through key flashpoints such as Berlin, Cuba, and Vietnam. The examination of this topic is guided by a three-year rotation cycle approved by the DBE, which ensures that subtopics are distributed systematically across years rather than repeated annually. Between 2022 and 2024, the source-based questions consistently focused on the European theatre of the Cold War, while essay questions focused on the Vietnam War as the non-European case study.

Specifically:

- 2022 (source-based): How did the Truman Doctrine contribute to Cold War tensions between the USA and USSR from 1947?
- 2023 (source-based): How did Berlin become a focal point of the Cold War tension between the USSR and USA in 1948?
- 2024 (source-based): How were the lives of Berliners affected by the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961?
- 2022 to 2024 (essays): Each year examined the Vietnam War through slightly varied perspectives, guerrilla tactics, military strategy, and the limits of U.S. technological superiority, covering the period 1962–1975.

The repetition of these subtopics across three years demonstrates a structured rotational approach rather than random repetition. This aligns with CAPS's intention to allow learners to develop depth within selected subtopics during each three-year cycle, before the next rotation introduces new Cold War case studies (e.g., the Cuban Missile Crisis and China) expected from 2026 onwards.

Thus, while the pattern may appear predictable, it reflects an acceptable level of predictability consistent with the curriculum coverage policy. It ensures that all learners in a cohort study the same high-priority content areas while maintaining consistency with national assessments. However, to strengthen alignment with the broader CAPS Cold War objectives, future cycles could rotate

subtopics more inclusively by alternating between European and non-European contexts within the same cycle. This would expose learners to a wider range of Cold War case studies and mitigate the perception of content narrowing.

In summary, content coverage across 2022 to 2024 reveals a deliberate curricular focus on Europe (the Truman Doctrine and Berlin) and Asia (the Vietnam War), reflecting both the ideological and military dimensions of the Cold War. The repetition of these areas indicates policy-driven predictability rather than an assessment flaw, contributing to continuity, fairness, and content depth across cohorts.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the mark allocation for the Cold War has remained largely consistent across the three years, with each paper assigning 100 marks (50 for a source-based question and 50 for an essay question). This distribution aligns with the CAPS History, which prescribes balanced assessment between Paper 1: Source-based interpretation and Essay writing. The Cold War continues to form the first topic in Paper 1 and thus retains consistent prominence in the examination structure.

A closer review indicates the following patterns:

- 2022: Question 1 (source-based) on The Truman Doctrine (1947) – 50 marks; Question 4 (essay) on The Vietnam War (1962–1975) – 50 marks.
- 2023: Question 1 (source-based) on Berlin Blockade (1948) – 50 marks; Question 4 (essay) on Vietnam War (1963–1975) – 50 marks.
- 2024: Question 1 (source-based) on Berlin Wall (1961) – 50 marks; Question 4 (essay) on Vietnam War (1962–1973) – 50 marks.

This demonstrates that weighting has neither increased nor decreased but has remained consistent at 100 marks, accounting for approximately 33% of the total Paper 1 examination marks. This stability reflects acceptable predictability, as it ensures reliability and fairness in national assessment. Furthermore, the consistent structure supports learners and educators in developing balanced

competencies across both historical interpretation and extended essay writing, which are core skills outlined in the CAPS cognitive skills framework.

However, the repetition of the same mark distribution and subtopic pairing, European Cold War (source-based) and Asian Cold War (essay), may contribute to perceived predictability. To reduce this, the assessment body (DBE) could periodically rotate the weighting emphasis by:

- Alternating the source-based question between European, Asian, and African Cold War contexts.
- Introducing two shorter source-based items (25 marks each) from different Cold War sub-themes instead of a single 50-mark item.
- Occasionally reversing focus, e.g., assigning the Vietnam War as a source-based question and Berlin or Cuba as the essay.

Despite these suggestions, the current pattern reflects an acceptable level of predictability grounded in assessment policy and curriculum intent. The consistent weighting enhances transparency and standardisation, enabling equitable preparation across provinces. Thus, while introducing rotational variety may increase flexibility, maintaining the current balance remains pedagogically sound and policy-aligned with the CAPS framework.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that over the three-year period (2022 to 2024), the History Paper 1 examinations show meaningful variation in the item types used to assess Cold War subtopics, while the overall assessment structure remains stable. In all three years, the Cold War source-based question consisted of a single political cartoon accompanied by three different textual sources, yet the visual and textual materials were completely distinct from one year to the next and were carefully selected to align with the specific historical focus of each examination session. For example, the 2022 cartoon supported an analysis of the Truman Doctrine, whereas the 2023 cartoon centres on the Berlin Blockade, and the 2024 cartoon explored experiences related to the Berlin Wall, with each representing

different visual styles, perspectives, and interpretative demands. Alongside these visual sources, the textual extracts varied significantly in authorship, intention, and complexity, ranging from speeches and policy statements to explanations, eyewitness accounts, and analytical commentaries. Although the mark allocation for these item types remained consistent, each source-based question was allocated 50 marks and progressed through extraction, interpretation, and evaluation as required by the CAPS.

The internal distribution of marks across these sub-questions varied, with some years emphasising comparison and reliability (L3), while others foregrounded different definitions and explanations (L2) of Historical concepts. In addition, the difficulty levels associated with item types vary annually; for instance, while all years incorporate CAPS L1–L3, the 2023 and 2024 papers include a higher proportion of L3 evaluative items, whereas 2022 leans more heavily on L2 interpretation items. A similar pattern of variation was seen in the essay questions, which consistently assess L3 cognitive demands but shift in argumentative structure: 2022 required agreement or disagreement, 2023 demanded critical discussion, and 2024 asked for an extent-based judgment. Given these patterns, it is evident that although the macro structure of item types remains predictably stable, ensuring fairness and alignment with CAPS, the micro-level construction of tasks, including the nature of visual sources, the phrasing of questions, and the weighting of cognitive levels, varied sufficiently to prevent unacceptable predictability. To maintain this balance, the assessment body should continue rotating source genres and question angles while preserving the CAPS-aligned structure.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that the History Paper 1 examinations demonstrate a structured yet sufficiently varied pairing of cognitive skills with Cold War subtopics across the three-year period. In Question 1, the source-based question, key skills such as extracting information, interpreting evidence, writing a paragraph, comparing evidence and information from sources, and evaluating reliability, usefulness and limitations recurred, as required by the CAPS cognitive level framework for source-based work. However, despite this structural consistency, the specific skill emphasis shifted annually depending on the subtopic assessed.

For instance, the 2022 Truman Doctrine question placed greater emphasis on ideological interpretation and extraction, whereas the 2023 Berlin Blockade question required more reasoning, comparison of motives, and evaluation of superpower actions. In 2024, the Berlin Wall question centred more heavily on assessing human experiences, evaluating social impact and interpreting symbolism in both textual and visual sources. Similarly, Question 4, the essay on the Vietnam War, consistently assessed analysis, explanation, evaluation, and argument construction, but the specific skill application differed, with each year's framing of the question ranging from agreement/disagreement (2022) to critical discussion (2023), to extent-based evaluation (2024).

This demonstrates that while the overall skill categories remained anchored in CAPS requirements, their pairing with Cold War subtopics varied in emphasis from year to year. As such, the skill demands cannot be viewed as unacceptably predictable; rather, they reflect a balanced pattern that maintains consistency without encouraging rote responses. To preserve this acceptable level of predictability, the assessment body should continue ensuring that each Cold War question samples a range of skills across L1–L3 for source-based items and L3 for essays, while varying the dominant skill emphasis according to the selected subtopic.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The observed patterns indicate that the framing of the Cold War questions across 2022 to 2024 reflects both structural consistency and variation in contextual presentation. In Question 1, each examination year employed a scenario rooted in a specific Cold War event, yet the historical contexts differ substantially. The 2022 scenario focused on the ideological launch of American containment through the Truman Doctrine, the 2023 scenario shifted to the geopolitical confrontation of the Berlin Blockade and Airlift, and the 2024 scenario foregrounds the lived realities of Berliners during the construction of the Berlin Wall. These shifts ensured that although the overarching Cold War theme remained constant, the narrative entry points and contextual demands differed across years. The framing devices, the political cartoon, accompanying extracts, and contextual introductions were likewise unique each year, reflecting changing political actors, motivations, and historical consequences.

Similarly, the Cold War essay (Question 4) consistently drew on the Vietnam War, yet the scenario constructed for each question varied meaningfully: the 2022 essay foregrounded guerrilla tactics and environmental challenges, the 2023 essay centres on Vietcong tactics undermining U.S. strategies, and the 2024 essay examined the extent to which U.S. technological superiority failed to secure victory. Together, these patterns indicated that the contextual framing was predictable only at the macro-level, in that sources and essays consistently came from the Cold War, but highly variable at the micro-level, preventing learners from anticipating specific scenario types. Since this reflects an acceptable level of predictability, the assessment body should maintain its practice of using different Cold War events and updated source sets each year. To further strengthen variation, DBE may periodically integrate alternative Cold War lenses, such as Africa's Cold War battles, the Cuban Missile Crisis, or the Non-Aligned Movement to ensure broader contextual sampling while preserving CAPS alignment.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the DBE History Cold War (1945–1990) topic

Table 3.1.2 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability.

Table 3.1.2: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of the 2022–2024 DBE History Cold War (1945–1990) Topic Paper 1

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
There was no unacceptable predictability in the coverage of the Cold War topic. Its annual appearance is mandated by the CAPS, thereby fully justifying its presence in both Question 1 (source-based) and Question 4 (essay). The Cold War is a compulsory Paper 1 topic; therefore, its consistent inclusion across 2022, 2023, and 2024 reflects curriculum compliance rather than problematic repetition.

Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
The DBE should maintain rotation across Cold War sub-themes such as the Truman Doctrine, the Berlin Crisis, the Arms Race, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and Vietnam, as well as any Cold War proxy conflicts listed in CAPS.
Identified unacceptable predictability on content coverage
No unacceptable predictability was present because subtopics shift annually. Content coverage for the Cold War indicates appropriate variation. Each year highlights a different Cold War flashpoint, which prevents learners from anticipating the same event. For example, the 2022 Question 1 sources emphasised the Truman Doctrine; the 2023 set focused on the Berlin Blockade; and the 2024 cluster assessed the Berlin Wall and its effect on ordinary Berliners. Similarly, the Vietnam essays for Question 4 varied in emphasis across guerrilla tactics, US military strategies, environmental factors, and the limits of technological superiority.
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage
The DBE should continue rotating Cold War confrontations and proxy wars, ensuring that no subtopic repeats consecutively.
Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Maintain diversity in Cold War episodes by selecting different geopolitical tensions for SBQs and varying the angle of the Vietnam essay (success/failure, strategy comparison, tactical analysis, social impact).
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
The topic weighting was fixed at 50 marks per source-based question and 50 marks per essay, as mandated by the CAPS. Although predictable, this consistency is intentional and acceptable. It ensures comparability and national standardisation.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
The DBE should vary internal mark distribution within the 50 marks (e.g., shifting emphasis across L1–L3, comparative questions, reliability questions, or extended paragraphs), thereby promoting assessment diversity without altering the overall weighting.

Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Although the SBQ and essay formats are constant, item types vary across combinations of photographs, propaganda posters, political speeches, maps and textual extracts. Essay phrasing also changes each year meaningfully, despite the focus on Vietnam.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types
Continue rotating source genres and altering the essay's analytical demands (extent, agree/disagree, evaluate, discuss).
Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Mix visual and textual sources, use contrasting perspectives, and vary the framing of Vietnam War essays to sustain intellectual diversity.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
Topic–skill pairing is varied. Although extraction, interpretation, comparison, and evaluation recur each year, the emphasis on skills varies depending on the Cold War event. For example, 2022 emphasised ideological interpretation; 2023 emphasised causation and comparison; and 2024 emphasised human impact and contextual evaluation.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
Continue aligning the dominant skills to the specific Cold War event chosen each year.
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Rotate the skills most required, such as evaluation of limitations, usefulness, and reliability, contextual analysis, or cause–effect mapping, depending on the chosen subtopic.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items
Scenario framing changes substantially. Each year foregrounds a different Cold War confrontation or geographical location, and the Vietnam essays also change focus. This ensures that contextual predictability is avoided.

Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.
Maintain variation in Cold War flashpoints and avoid returning to the same scenario in consecutive years.
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Select different Cold War crises, change the lens applied to Vietnam essays, and ensure diverse geopolitical contexts.

Table 3.1.3 below summarises the analysis conducted to assess the level of predictability of the Independent Africa (1960s and 1970s) Topic for DBE History Paper 1 examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.1.3: Findings on the Predictability of the Independent Africa (1960s and 1970s) Topic for the DBE History Paper 1 Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic 2: Independent Africa (1960s and 1970s)							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**

2022	✓	1. Angola: Battle of Cuito Cuanavale = 50	100	1. Source-based questions: Short items (1–4 marks each), Paragraph question = 8 (50 marks for Overall SBQ)	1. Source-based question: L1–L3	1. Battle of Cuito Cuanavale Source-based questions: L1–L3	Source interpretation, comparison, explanation of concepts, Source extraction and selection of information
		2. Independent Africa case study: The Congo = 50		2. Essay Questions = 50	1. Essay Question L3–L4	2. Independent Africa case study: The Congo Essay Question L3	Analysis of policies, Presentation of content, application of the PEEL Method, sustained line of argument

2023	✓	1. Angola: MPLA, FNLA AND UNITA becoming involved in the Angolan Civil War in 1975 = 50	100	1. Source-based questions: Short items (1–4 marks each), Paragraph question = 8 (50 marks for Overall SBQ)	L1–L3	1. Angola: MPLA, FNLA AND UNITA becoming involved in the Angolan Civil War in 1975 = 50 Source-based question: L1–L3	Source interpretation, comparison, explanation of concepts, extraction and selection of information
		2. Independent Africa case study: The Congo = 50		2. Essay Questions = 50	L3–L4	2. Independent Africa case study: The Congo Essay Question L3	Presentation of content, application of the PEEL Method, sustained line of argument, Analysis of policies

2024	✓	1. Angola: Battle of Cuito Cuanavale = 50	100	1. Source-based questions: Short items (1–4 marks each), Paragraph question = 8 (50 marks for Overall BQ)	Levels L1–L3	1. Battle of Cuito Cuanavale Source-based question: Levels L1–L3	Contextual comprehension, Source interpretation, comparison, explanation of concepts, extraction and selection of information
		2. Independent Africa case study: The Congo = 50		2. Essay Questions = 50	L3–L4	2. Independent Africa case study: The Congo Essay Question L3	Presentation of content, policy critique, application of the PEEL Method, sustained line of argument

Table 3.1.3 presents a comparative overview of the Independent Africa (1960s and 1970s) topic over the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.1.3 have contributed to the predictability of the DBE History Paper 1 final examination from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that the topic Independent Africa recurred across all three years in both the source-based and essay components of Paper 1, reflecting its compulsory status in the CAPS Section 4. In each examination year, Question 2 assessed the subtopic Angola: The Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, while Question 5 assessed the Congo Crisis, indicating that Independent Africa was examined twice within the same paper and with strict adherence to CAPS' structural expectations. The question papers for 2022, 2023, and 2024 all confirm this pattern: Question 2 was always devoted to Angola, and Question 5 was always an extended essay on Congo.

The CAPS prescribes the Congo Crisis as the only essay question under Independent Africa (with Tanzania excluded); this exact repetition is expected and acceptable. The consistent appearance of both Angola and the Congo across three years indicates a predictable, policy-driven pattern aligned with national assessment requirements rather than uncontrolled predictability. Where predictability does emerge, it is curriculum-mandated rather than a design flaw. To maintain balanced coverage, DBE should continue to assess both subtopics but could rotate the focus within the Cuito Cuanavale event to reinforce breadth without altering the CAPS compliance.

b. Content coverage

The findings indicate that, while Independent Africa was consistently examined, the specific sub-areas and angles of inquiry varied annually. For Question 2, each year's sources engaged with different dimensions of Cuito Cuanavale:

- 2022 emphasised the military confrontation, including tactical manoeuvres and the involvement of Cuban, Angolan, and South African forces.
- 2023 shifted the focus to the regional geopolitical implications of the battle, highlighting its influence on Southern African liberation and Cold War alignments.

- 2024 reframed the topic through diplomatic negotiations, foregrounding the Tripartite Accord and its role in advancing Namibia's independence.

This variation ensured that different layers of Angola's post-independence struggle were covered, rather than repeating the same content.

Similarly, although Question 5 consistently assessed the Congo Crisis, the content emphasis differed each year.

- 2022 highlighted the internal instability immediately after independence (Katanga, Lumumba, Belgian involvement).
- 2023 focused on the Congo as a Cold War battleground, emphasising CIA, UN, and Soviet influence.
- 2024 examined leadership crises, secession, and foreign intervention, shifting the lens to internal and external power struggles.

Across all three years, the CAPS-mandated content was covered, but each paper selected different episodes or causal explanations, preventing unacceptable predictability. Since the variation appeared at the level of subtopic selection and framing, the pattern is considered healthy and balanced. If additional variation is needed in future cycles, DBE may alternate among the political, economic, and military dimensions of both Angola and the Congo to broaden the scope of the examination while preserving CAPS alignment.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the overall weight allocated to Independent Africa in Paper 1 remained consistent across the 2022 to 2024 examination cycle. In each year, the Section A source-based cluster was consistently allocated the standard 50 marks, while the corresponding Section B essay question on the Congo was also allocated 50 marks when attempted. This uniform weighting was entirely aligned with the CAPS requirements for Paper 1 and reflected the national examination policy rather than a focus on predictability. A closer evaluation of the internal mark distribution within the source-based questions for Angola further confirms that

the sub-questions adhered to the CAPS cognitive framework. Each year included the required balance of L1–L3 and the allocation of marks for each cognitive demand remained appropriate. For example, the 2022 paper required candidates to define the term "provisional government," answer a L3 question on the reliability of a source, and explain the term "accord."

In the 2023 paper, candidates responded to a L3 question assessing the usefulness of a source for studying the Angolan Civil War, as well as definitions of civil war and revolution. Similarly, in 2024, learners were required to explain the term "internationalism" in the context of Cuba's foreign policy, analyse the limitations of a source when researching the outcome of the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale and define the term "sovereignty."

These examples illustrate that although the distribution of question styles and cognitive tasks changed naturally in response to the selected sources, the underlying mark structure remained stable and compliant with the CAPS. Rather than indicating disproportionate emphasis on specific skills in any given year, the variation reflects the contextual demands of the chosen sources and events from Angola's history. The examination design therefore maintained consistent weighting while still providing sufficient variation in skill emphasis, source engagement, and analytical focus across the three-year cycle.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that although the overall structure of item types for Independent Africa remained constant from 2022 to 2024, substantial variation occurred in how the tasks were constructed and operationalised. In each year, Question 2 used the standard source-based design comprising four sources and a set of sub-questions that assess extraction, interpretation, comparison, and evaluation. However, the item types embedded within the cluster varied meaningfully, as the sources themselves differed substantially across the three years. For example, the 2022 addendum included a statistical table contrasting claims about casualties at Cuito Cuanavale alongside textual extracts debating interpretations of the battle. In 2023, the cluster instead incorporated a

press image and narrative extracts emphasising political, ethnic, and external causes of the Angolan conflict, thus shifting the item-type emphasis toward comparison and causal reasoning.

By contrast, the 2024 cluster contained a photograph of the Tripartite Accord signing embedded within a diplomatic-consequences narrative, which required interpretation of political symbolism and synthesis of regional implications. Despite these variations, the mark allocation remained broadly stable, with 50 marks per cluster and a balanced distribution of cognitive levels as required by CAPS, but the internal weight given to specific item types (e.g., reliability, explanation, comparison and paragraph writing) shifted from year to year.

A similar pattern was observed in Question 5, where the essay on the Congo remained a constant CAPS requirement, yet the phrasing of the essay question changed annually, altering the type of extended writing demanded. For example, some years emphasised causation, others emphasised evaluation of external involvement, and others probed leadership and internal crisis. These patterns together demonstrate that although the macro-item types remained predictably consistent, the micro-item types exhibited sufficient variation to prevent unacceptable predictability. To preserve this balance, DBE should continue to vary the textual, visual, and statistical sources used in Question 2 and maintain rotational variation in Congo Crisis essay angles, while retaining the CAPS-mandated overall structure.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that the skill-to-topic pairing for Independent Africa indicates a steady alignment with the CAPS while maintaining enough variation to prevent memorisation or mechanical preparation. In Question 2, the skills assessed across the three-year period consistently included information extraction, interpretation of meaning, comparison of perspectives, causation analysis, and evaluation of reliability or bias, which correspond to the three cognitive levels for source-based assessment. However, the

dominant required skills varied depending on the year's source construction and focus. In 2022, learners were required to engage mainly in cause-and-effect reasoning and interpretation of conflicting quantitative claims about Cuito Cuanavale, whereas in 2023 the skills leaned more toward evaluating competing explanations for the origins of the Angolan Civil War and comparing internal versus external drivers.

In 2024, the presence of a diplomatic photograph and negotiation-focused extracts shifted the emphasis toward interpreting political significance, drawing inferences about regional change, and evaluating diplomatic outcomes tied to the Tripartite Accord. In Question 5, the Congo essay consistently drew on high-level cognitive skills such as argument construction, synthesis of evidence, critical explanation, and evaluation of causes and consequences, but the specific skill pairings shifted annually according to the essay prompt. For example, the 2022 essay foregrounded an analysis of internal instability at independence; the 2023 essay demanded an interpretation of Cold War influences; and the 2024 essay required an evaluation of leadership, secession, and external intervention. Collectively, these variations indicate that the skill demands remained predictable at the structural level (consistent with the CAPS), but varied at the conceptual level, ensuring a balanced and fair assessment. To maintain this acceptable predictability, future assessments should continue to rotate skill emphases within each subtopic rather than anchoring the same skill pattern to the same content year after year.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The patterns observed indicate that the scenario framing for Independent Africa questions evolved substantially across the three years, although the overarching topics remained the same, thereby preventing predictable contextual framing. In Question 2, the 2022 scenario was framed around the military contestation of the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, highlighting combat strategies and contested claims to victory. In 2023, the scenario shifted to a political and ideological framing, positioning Angola within a broader landscape of ethnic divisions, Cold War competition, and shifting alliances. By 2024, the scenario pivoted toward a diplomatic

framing, linking the SADF defeat to negotiations and the signing of the Tripartite Accord, and embedding this within a photograph that grounds the question in a real-world political moment.

This annual rotation of scenario types from battlefield analysis to political causation to diplomatic resolution indicated deliberate variation in contextual design. Similarly, the Congo essay scenarios changed yearly to foreground different aspects of the crisis: independence-era fragmentation, Cold War rivalry, or leadership and secession. These shifts demonstrate that, although the topic is predictably assessed, the scenario framing itself avoids repetition and compels learners to demonstrate genuine historical understanding rather than rely on memorised templates. Since the predictability is confined to the macro-topic selection rather than the scenario type, this represents acceptable predictability. To maintain this standard, the DBE should continue rotating scenario angles within both Angola and Congo while ensuring that each framing remains historically authentic and aligned with the CAPS.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the DBE History Independent Africa (1960s and 1970s) topic

Table 3.1.4 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability.

Table 3.1.4: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of the 2022–2024 DBE History Independent Africa (1960s and 1970s) Topic Paper 1

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
No unacceptable predictability was observed. Independent Africa is a CAPS-mandated Paper 1 topic. Angola appears consistently in Question 2 (source-based), and Congo is the essay question in Question 5, reflecting curriculum requirements rather than examination predictability.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic coverage

None required. However, the DBE should continue to vary Angola subtopics (foreign intervention, civil war dynamics, Cold War influences, SADF involvement, Tripartite Accord) and maintain the Congo essay with changing analytical directions.
Identified unacceptable predictability in content coverage
Rotate subtopics within Angola and vary the essay emphasis on Congo without changing the mandated topic coverage.
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage
Continue rotating internal subtopics in Angola and vary essay angles in Congo (causation, consequences, significance, leadership evaluation).
Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Ensure that even within Angola, the source focus shifts annually among military, political and diplomatic aspects to avoid content repetition.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
The weighting remains constant (50 + 50 marks), as mandated by the CAPS. Although predictable, this is structurally necessary rather than pedagogically limiting.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Vary internal weighting within the 50-mark SBQ across L1–L3 questions and change the difficulty balance to maintain variation and minimise predictability.
Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
Item types indicated appropriate variation. Angola SBQs use various combinations of maps, statistical tables, propaganda posters, diplomatic correspondence, and military photographs. Congo essays are framed each year differently, requiring varied argumentative or analytical skills.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types

Continue diversifying source genres (e.g., negotiation transcripts, battlefield maps, political speeches) and essay orientations.
Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Use a mix of qualitative and quantitative sources in Angola; vary essay prompts such as "To what extent…," "Do you agree…," or "Critically discuss…"
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
Skill pairing was varied and aligned with the CAPS. Angola SBQs shift in emphasis from interpreting statistical data to evaluating foreign intervention, assessing motives, and analysing multiple perspectives. Congo essays demand high-order skills each year but vary in required argument style.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
Maintain diversity in skill emphasis by pairing different Angolan subtopics with different cognitive demands.
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Rotate between comparison, analytical reasoning, bias evaluation, and causal analysis in Angola; vary essay phrasing in Congo to alter the cognitive focus.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items
Scenario framing is dynamic across all years. Angola SBQs place learners in different phases of the civil war or peace negotiations. Similarly, Congo essays present scenarios requiring evaluation of leadership failures, foreign interference, or political instability.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.
Avoid repeating identical Angolan scenarios (e.g., Cuito Cuanavale) in consecutive years.
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Select different historical moments from Angola's long crisis trajectory and rotate the narrative framing of Congo to ensure contextual variety.

Table 3.1.5 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability of the Civil Society Protest in the USA (1950s–1970s) Topic for DBE History Paper 1 examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.1.5: Findings on the Predictability of the Civil Society Protest in the USA (1950s–1970s) Topic for the DBE History Paper 1 examinations from 2022 to 2024

Topic 3: Civil Society Protest in the USA (1950s–1970s)							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**
2022	✓	1. Civil Rights Movement in the USA: Selma to Montgomery Marches = 50	100	1. Source-based questions: Short items (1–4 marks each), Paragraph question = 8 (50 marks for Overall SBQ)	1. Source-based question L1–L3	1. Civil Rights Movement in the USA: Selma to Montgomery Marches Source-based questions: L1–L3	Usefulness of the source, Source interpretation, comparison, explanation of concepts, Source extraction and

							selection of information
		2. Civil society Protests: The Black Power Movement- How various role-players were successful = 50		2. Essay Questions = 50	2. Essay Question L3–L4	2. Civil society Protests: The Black Power Movement - How various role players were successful Essay Question L3	Analysis of policies, Presentation of content, application of the PEEL Method, sustained line of argument

2023	✓	1. Civil Rights Movement in the USA: Freedom Rides in the USA = 50	100	1. Source-based questions: short items (1–4 marks each), Paragraph question = 8 (50 marks for Overall SBQ)	1. Source-based question L1–L3	1. Civil Rights Movement in the USA: Freedom Rides in the USA Source-based question: L1–L3	Reliability of the source, source interpretation, comparison, explanation of concepts, extraction and selection of information
		2. Civil society Protests: The Black Power Movement's use of violent, radical and militant strategies = 50		2. Essay Questions = 50	2. Essay Question L3–L4	2. Civil society Protests: The Black Power Movement- use of violent, radical and militant strategies Essay Question L3	Presentation of content, application of the PEEL Method, sustained line of argument, analysis of policies,
2024	✓	1. Civil Rights Movement in the USA: The		1. Source-based questions: short items (1–4 marks	1. Source-based question: L1–L3	1. Civil Rights Movement in the USA: The March on Washington	Contextual comprehension, Source interpretation,

		March on Washington = 50	100	each), Paragraph question = 8 (50 marks for Overall BQ)		Source-based question: L1–L3	Usefulness of the source, comparison, explanation of concepts, extraction and selection of information
		2. Civil society Protests: The Black Power Movement - Militant approach = 50		2. Essay Questions = 50	2. Essay Question L3– L4	2. Civil society Protests: The Black Power Movement- militant approach Essay Question L3	Presentation of content, policies critique, application of the PEEL Method, sustained line of argument

Table 3.1.5 presents a comparative overview of the Civil Society Protest in the USA (1950s–1970s) topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.1.5 have contributed to the predictability of the DBE History Paper 1 final examination from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that across the 2022 to 2024 examination cycle, Topic 3, Civil Society Protests from the 1950s to the 1970s, recurred in both Section A and Section B of the NSC History Paper 1. Question 3 was devoted each year to the US Civil Rights Movement, demonstrating stable topical placement that aligned with the CAPS prescription for Paper 1. The source-based clusters confirm this annual coverage. In 2022, Question 3 examined the Selma–Montgomery March; in 2023, it focused on the Montgomery Bus Boycott; and in 2024, it assessed the March on Washington, as reflected in the visual and textual sources presented in the addenda.

Similarly, the Black Power Movement appeared each year as Question 6, confirming its consistent role as the accompanying essay question for Topic 3. Although the precise analytical angle shifted from year to year, the topic itself remained constant across all three papers. This predictable inclusion of both the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement reflects policy-driven stability rather than assessment predictability. CAPS specifies both subtopics under Civil Society Protests, making their appearance mandatory rather than optional. Consequently, the coverage across all three years demonstrates acceptable, curriculum-aligned consistency rather than undesirable repetition.

b. Content coverage

The findings indicate that although Topic 3 recurred across the 2022 to 2024 examination cycle, the specific content emphasis shifted considerably each year, both within the Civil Rights Movement (Question 3) and the Black Power Movement (Question 6). In Question 3, the Civil Rights Movement subtopics rotated annually to ensure broad coverage of the curriculum. The 2022 paper focused on the Selma–Montgomery March and highlighted the violent suppression of Black voter registration, the resistance strategies adopted by civil rights activists, and the eventual need for federal intervention. In contrast, the 2023 paper examined the Montgomery Bus Boycott, with emphasis on community mobilisation, disciplined nonviolent resistance and the emergence of Martin Luther King Jr as a prominent leader. By 2024, the emphasis shifted to the March on Washington, which foregrounds mass mobilisation, national protest

messaging, and the significance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. Together, these annual rotations ensured that learners were exposed to a wide range of civil rights events, themes and strategies rather than a recurring pattern of identical content.

A similar balance between consistency and variation was evident in the Black Power Movement essays. Although Question 6 focused on Black Power each year, the analytical framing differed meaningfully across the three papers. In 2022, learners were asked, "To what extent did the Black Power Movement succeed in promoting the rights of African Americans…?" This question emphasised evaluating outcomes and assessing success. The 2023 essay shifted the analytical lens by asking: "Do you agree that the Black Power Movement played a significant role in transforming the struggle for the rights of African Americans…?" which required learners to focus on transformation, ideological shifts and strategic evolution. In 2024, the question reframed the discussion by asking: "Explain to what extent the Black Power Movement influenced the lives of African Americans…," thereby directing attention to the social, cultural and economic impact of the movement. These shifts in essay framing ensured that, although the topic remained stable due to CAPS requirements, the specific content demands varied across years. Consequently, content coverage remained broad, balanced and aligned with curriculum expectations while avoiding unacceptable predictability.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the weighting allocated to Topic 3 remained consistent across the 2022 to 2024 examinations, reflecting the standardised structure of the NSC History Paper 1. In each year, the Civil Rights Movement source-based question (Question 3) contributes 50 marks, and the Black Power Movement essay (Question 6) contributes an additional 50 marks. This stable distribution is aligned with CAPS, which requires equal weighting across the major topics assessed in Paper 1. Within Question 3, the internal distribution of marks across cognitive levels, namely extraction, interpretation and evaluation, also remained balanced and in accordance with the CAPS guidelines. Although the specific subtopics differ each year, the cognitive progression remained unchanged, supporting reliability and comparability across cohorts.

Similarly, the essay rubric for Question 6 remained identical across all three examination years and followed the NSC global essay-marking matrix, in which essays are assessed holistically out of 50 marks. The matrix does not allocate separate marks to content and structure; instead, it evaluates the overall quality of the argument, the depth and accuracy of historical content, the coherence of presentation, and the candidate's ability to synthesise evidence meaningfully. Although this holistic approach to marking is predictable, such predictability is both intentional and acceptable, as it reflects national assessment policy rather than repetitive question design. Variation arises not from changes in the essay mark allocation, which is fixed, but from the annual shifts in analytical framing within the Black Power questions and the rotation of subtopics within the Civil Rights Movement. Consequently, while the weighting remained constant across the three years, this did not compromise the integrity or dynamism of the assessment, as the conceptual demands and argument orientations changed each year sufficiently to ensure depth and fairness.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that the 2022 to 2024 examination cycle demonstrates a balanced approach to assessing Topic 3. While the general structure of Question 3 remained consistent, significant variation was introduced through the selection and design of sources. In 2022, the source set included a photograph of police brutality at Selma and politically charged textual extracts that foreground denial of voting rights and the need for federal intervention. In 2023, the composition shifted towards narrative extracts and visual material depicting community organisation during the Montgomery Bus Boycott. The 2024 source cluster included photographic and textual evidence capturing the national significance of the March on Washington. These variations influenced the nature of the sub-questions, which may require interpreting symbolic imagery in one year and evaluating organisational strategies in another.

Similarly, although Question 6 consistently appeared as a 50-mark essay, the phrasing of the question varied substantially across the three years, altering the required item type at a conceptual level. In 2022, learners were required to evaluate the Black Power Movement's success by responding to the question: "To what extent did the Black Power Movement succeed…?" In 2023, they were

required to construct an argument in response to: "Do you agree that the Black Power Movement played a significant role…?" In 2024, they were required to analyse influence by responding to: "Explain to what extent the Black Power Movement influenced the lives of African Americans…" These shifts ensured that learners could not rely on memorised essay templates but instead had to tailor their responses to the specific analytical demands posed. Overall, the assessment design maintained structural predictability, consistent marks and question placement while varying the item types in ways that promote analytical flexibility and minimise predictability.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that the topic-pairing skill in Topic 3 strikes a deliberate balance between consistency and variation. Question 3 consistently assessed the full range of the CAPS-prescribed skills, including extraction from sources, interpretation of meaning, identification of bias, comparison of perspectives and synthesis through a structured paragraph. However, the skills emphasised each year correspond to the distinct scenario being assessed. For example, the Selma-focused cluster in 2022 emphasised evaluating bias and analysing visual evidence of state violence, whereas the 2023 Montgomery Bus Boycott cluster emphasised causation, comparison and interpretation of organised resistance. By 2024, the March on Washington cluster foregrounded the interpretation of symbolism and the evaluation of national impact. These shifts ensured that the same foundational skills were applied to different contexts, thereby minimising predictability and encouraging conceptual transfer.

The Black Power Movement essays indicated a similar pattern: while each essay required high-order skills such as analysis, evaluation and synthesis, the specific skill emphasis varied with the phrasing of the question. The 2022 essay foregrounded evaluative judgement; the 2023 essay required argumentation and balanced reasoning; and the 2024 essay demanded interpretive and analytical discussion of influence. This rotation ensured that learners engage with Topic 3 in multiple cognitive ways rather than encountering repeated skill demands. Overall, the skill-to-topic pairing remained structurally consistent but substantively varied, supporting both reliability and depth of assessment.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The observed patterns indicate that the scenario framing for Topic 3 changed substantially over the three-year examination cycle, thereby reducing predictability and promoting deeper engagement with historical contexts. In Question 3, each Civil Rights Movement cluster was rooted in a different protest scenario. The 2022 framing positioned learners within the violent suppression of the Selma–Montgomery March; the 2023 framing immersed them in the disciplined community action of the Montgomery Bus Boycott; and the 2024 framing placed them within the national mobilisation of the March on Washington. These contextual shifts exposed learners to different types of protest environments, ranging from confrontation and intimidation to organisation and national unity, requiring flexible application of analytical skills.

The essays in Question 6 further reinforced this variation. The 2022 scenario was framed around assessing success; the 2023 scenario foregrounded transformation; and the 2024 scenario was centred on influence. Each framing directed learners toward different interpretive angles, ensuring that the Black Power Movement was analysed through varied conceptual lenses rather than recurring patterns. Together, the shifting scenarios across both questions demonstrate deliberate variation in contextual framing. This prevented learners from anticipating a specific scenario and instead encouraged them to apply their historical knowledge within new and evolving contexts each year. To maintain this balance, the DBE should continue to select diverse protest events and vary the analytical orientation of the Black Power essay prompts.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the DBE History Civil Society Protest in the USA (1950s–1970s) topic

Table 3.1.6 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability.

Table 3.1.6: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of the 2022–2024 DBE History Civil Society Protest in the USA (1950s–1970s) Topic Paper 1

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
There was no unacceptable predictability in the coverage of Topic 3 because both the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement are mandated by the CAPS to appear annually. Their repeated appearance reflects curriculum requirements rather than repetitive assessment design. The coverage therefore represents acceptable policy-driven consistency.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
The DBE should continue to rotate specific subtopics (e.g., Selma, Montgomery, March on Washington; ideological, organisational, cultural dimensions of Black Power) to prevent repetition at the subtopic level.
Identified unacceptable predictability on content coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Although Topic 3 appears each year, the specific content focus (Selma vs Montgomery vs Washington; achievements vs transformation vs influence) shifts significantly. This variation prevents content-level repetition.
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage

The DBE should continue to rotate Civil Rights Movement campaigns and vary the analytical angle of the Black Power essay. Examiners should also avoid repeating the same protest event or ideological theme in consecutive years.
Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Maintain compliance with CAPS by keeping Topic 3 in the examination but ensure rotational coverage of: • Different Civil Rights events • Distinct protest strategies • Different aspects of Black Power (ideology, community programmes, culture, leadership) This guarantees depth while preventing the reuse of identical content.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
No unacceptable predictability exists because the 50-mark SBQ + 50-mark essay weighting is standardised and required by CAPS. Weighting was structurally predictable but not pedagogically problematic.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Ensure that although the total marks remain constant, the internal distribution of L1–L3 questions, the type of sources used, and the analytical orientation of the essay continue to vary annually.
Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
No unacceptable predictability was detected. The macro-item types (source-based analysis and extended essay writing) remain constant due to CAPS. However, at the micro-level, the item types vary meaningfully (photographs vs narratives; symbolism vs mobilisation analysis; evaluative vs argumentative essays).
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types
The DBE should continue rotating the types of visual and textual sources (e.g., photographs, political speeches, newspaper reports, protest leaflets) and vary the argument orientation of the Black Power essay.

Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
The examiners should preserve the standard SBQ structure but continue adjusting: • The genre of sources • The cognitive focus of sub-question sequences • The phrasing of the Question 6 essay This supports CAPS outcomes while preventing predictable item patterns.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
No unacceptable predictability was found. Although extraction, interpretation, comparison, bias evaluation, and paragraph writing appear annually, the emphasis on different skills changes with each scenario (e.g., visual analysis in 2022, organisational analysis in 2023, symbolic interpretation in 2024).
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
Continue aligning skill emphasis with the nature of the selected campaign or essay framing each year. Avoid repeating the same dominant skill focus (for example, repeated emphasis on critically discuss) across consecutive years.
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Maintain the CAPS cognitive progression but ensure that different subtopics require different skills in different years. For instance, rotate between: • Usefulness, limitation and reliability evaluation • Cause-and-effect reasoning • Interpretive synthesis • Comparative analysis This keeps the skill demands dynamic.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items

No unacceptable predictability was identified because the scenarios change each year meaningfully (violent confrontation in 2022, community mobilisation in 2023, national demonstration in 2024). Essay scenarios also rotate across success, transformation, and influence.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.
Ensure that future papers continue to choose different Civil Rights campaigns and vary the conceptual lens applied to the Black Power Movement. Repetition of the same scenario should be avoided.
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
DBE should sustain the practice of: • Selecting a different Civil Rights protest event each year. • Framing Black Power essays around different analytical constructs (success, transformation, influence, limitations, community impact). • Incorporating varied source contexts (localised violence, grassroots organisation, national mobilisation).

Conclusions

Based on the evaluation of the 2022 to 2024 DBE History Paper 1 final examinations, the question papers do not demonstrate unacceptable predictability. While certain structural elements remain consistent across the three-year cycle, this consistency is a curriculum requirement rather than an assessment flaw. CAPS mandates the annual coverage of fixed topics such as the Cold War, Independent Africa, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Power Movement. Therefore, the repeated presence of these topics reflects policy-driven stability rather than problematic predictability.

Within the mandated topics, however, the content focus shifts each year significantly, preventing learners from relying on memorising specific events. For example, Cold War SBQs rotate among the Truman Doctrine, the Berlin Blockade, and the Berlin Wall; Independent Africa questions shift among different phases of the Angolan conflict; Civil Rights SBQs vary among Selma, Montgomery, and the March on Washington; and Black Power essays change analytical angles annually. These variations ensure that the papers do not recycle identical content.

Additionally, the item types, skills required, and scenario framing all vary meaningfully from year to year. Although the format (SBQ + essay) remains stable, the nature of questions such as reliability, usefulness, bias, comparison, paragraph writing, and higher-order evaluation changes in response to the selected sources. The distribution of cognitive levels also remains aligned with CAPS, with no evidence of repeated cognitive patterns that could contribute to predictability.

Overall, the structural consistency of the papers supports fairness and alignment with national standards, while the variations in content and skills prevent predictability. Therefore, the findings indicate that History as a subject, based on Paper 1 from 2022 to 2024, does not exhibit unacceptable predictability. Instead, it maintains a balanced and valid assessment structure that is both curriculum compliant and pedagogically sound.

3.2: HISTORY PAPER 2

This section analyses the DBE final examination question papers from 2022 to 2024 for History Paper 2 topics. The findings for each topic are summarised in Tables 3.2.1–3.2.6.

Table 3.2.1 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability of the Civil Resistance in South Africa, 1970s–1980s topic for DBE History Paper 2 examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.2.1: Findings on the Predictability of the Civil Resistance in South Africa, 1970s–1980s Topic for the DBE History Paper 2 Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic: Civil Resistance in South Africa, 1970s–1980s							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**
2022	✓	1. Internal Resistance - The Mass Democratic		1. Source-based questions (photographs, political	1. Source-based items progress from L1–L2 questions Extraction = L1	1. Source-based: L1–L3 Extraction = L1	1. Source analysis (usefulness, perspective),

		Movement (MDM) challenged the apartheid government's segregatory laws in the late 1980s = 50	100	cartoons, extracts = 50 Extraction =14 Interpretation = 20 Comparison = 4 Usefulness = 4 Paragraph Writing = 8	Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L2 Usefulness = L2 Paragraph = L2	Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L3 Usefulness = L3 Paragraph = L3	paragraph synthesis, critical interpretation of state -society relations
		2. Black Consciousness movement - The way the BCM instilled pride and self-belief among black South Africans to challenge apartheid		2. Essay	Essay: L2	2. Essay: L3	2. Essay - Evaluation of Black Consciousness philosophy and its influence on psychological liberation

		during the 1970s = 50					
2023	✓	1. Internal Resistance - How the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) responded to the apartheid government's labour reforms in the 1980s = 50		1. Source-based (Textual extracts, union documents, visual) Extraction = 14 Interpretation = 20 Comparison = 4 Usefulness = 4 Paragraph Writing = 8	1. Source-based: L1–L3 balance (from extraction to evaluative comparison) Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L2 Usefulness = L2 Paragraph = L2	1. Source-based: L1–L3 balanced Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L3 Usefulness = L3 Paragraph = L3	Interpretation of workers' resistance and government reforms, comparative analysis of perspectives; contextual interpretation
		2. Black Consciousness movement - Role in		2. Essay	2. Essay: L2	2. Essay: L3	Essay - Critical evaluation of Black Consciousness

		promoting self-reliance and psychological liberation as part of the struggle against apartheid in the 1970s					philosophy and evidence-based argument development
2024	✓	1. Internal Resistance- How civic organisations mobilised local communities to resist the apartheid government's structures in the 1980s = 50		1. Source-based (photographs, community newsletters, organisational manifestos) Extraction = 14 Interpretation = 20 Comparison = 4	1. Source-based items progress from L1–L2 questions Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L2 Usefulness = L2 Paragraph = L2	1. Source-based: L1–L3 Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L3 Usefulness = L3 Paragraph = L3	Contextual analysis, Extraction detection, integration of perspectives, Interpretation synthesis, paragraph construction

				Usefulness = 4 Paragraph Writing = 8			
		2. Black Consciousness movement-the extent to which Steve Biko and the BCM inspired black South Africans to empower themselves against apartheid during the 1960s and 1970s		2. Source – Analysis of perspectives, comparison, and contextual interpretation = 50	2. Essay: L2 (evaluation and synthesis)	Essay: L3	Essay – Assessment of Biko's influence, construction of evidence-based argument, and synthesis of historical interpretation

Table 3.2.1 presents a comparative overview of the Civil Resistance in South Africa, 1970s–1980s topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.2.1 have contributed to the predictability of the DBE History Paper 1 final examination from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that the topic Civil Resistance in South Africa, 1970s–1980s was examined in every final History Paper 2 across 2022 to 2024, appearing as Question 1 (source-based question) and again as Question 4 (essay) each year, in full alignment with the History CAPS document. The consistent inclusion of this topic reflects its compulsory status in Paper 2, where CAPS explicitly identifies it as a core focus area. This frequency does not imply undesirable predictability, since its repetition is policy-driven and ensures coverage of essential historical transformations in South Africa.

While the topic recurred annually, variation was achieved by selecting different sub-themes. The source-based questions shifted focus from the Mass Democratic Movement (2022) to COSATU's labour resistance (2023), and finally to civic organisations' local mobilisation (2024). Similarly, the essays varied their analytical angles within the theme of the Black Consciousness Movement, from general philosophy (2022) to self-liberation (2023) to Biko's inspirational leadership (2024). Consequently, the regular inclusion of the topic did not, on its own, indicate unacceptable predictability; instead, it reflected mandated topic coverage. Therefore, to maintain this balance, it is recommended that DBE continue to ensure that, while the topic remains a fixed feature, the subtopics and contextual focus rotate annually within the broader CAPS framework.

b. Content coverage

The findings indicate that although the overarching topic was examined annually, the content subtopics demonstrate sufficient variation. The source-based questions progressively shifted their focus across different forms of resistance, for instance, mass

movements (2022), trade union activism (2023), and community-based civic resistance (2024). Therefore, this reflects the diversity of actors within the broader anti-apartheid struggle and aligns with the CAPS' directive that learners "understand the nature of resistance to apartheid from various sectors of society." Similarly, in essays, the Black Consciousness theme recurred across all three years, with shifting emphases in interpretation. Each year's focus altered the scope of inquiry, ranging from psychological empowerment (2022) to self-reliance (2023) and Biko's leadership influence (2024). This subtle thematic rotation, maintained curriculum coherence while preventing question duplication.

The content coverage was therefore broad and well aligned with the CAPS requirements. This suggests that no single subtopic dominated all three years; rather, related but distinct case studies were used each year. On this basis, the content selection was not unduly predictable, as the patterns suggest purposeful rotation within the broader theme, reducing the likelihood of advance preparation. If the assessment body wishes to further strengthen variation, it could schedule non-consecutive repetitions of the same subtopic (for example, avoiding the same event twice within a three-year window) while ensuring that all CAPS sub-themes are represented across cycles.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the mark allocation for this topic has remained consistent over the three-year period, with 50 marks assigned to the source-based question and 50 marks to the essay, as per the CAPS guidelines. In addition, the CAPS mandates that each topic in Paper 2 "be assessed through one source-based question (50 marks) and one essay question (50 marks)," ensuring equal representation of historical inquiry skills. This weighting reflects the standard configuration for each Paper 2 topic and ensures a balanced evaluation between comprehension, analysis, and synthesis skills.

The internal distribution of marks across sub-questions in the source-based section also followed a consistent cognitive progression, with lower-level (L1) items testing factual recall and higher-level (L3) items testing interpretation and evaluation. The essays were

marked holistically using the DBE global rubric, emphasising argument construction and evidence synthesis. This stable weighting does not contribute to predictability; rather, it ensures standardisation and fairness. The DBE should maintain this structure while continuing to vary the focus and depth of subtopics within each year's examination cycle.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that the item types for this topic have remained consistent with the CAPS prescriptions while indicating sufficient variation in source design and essay framing. The source-based questions in 2022 to 2024 employ mixed visual and textual evidence, ranging from photographs, cartoons and political posters to extracts from union documents and newspaper articles. The visual sources vary across years: 2022 featured protest imagery, 2023 included trade union-related documents, and 2024 introduced civic mobilisation materials.

Across all three years, the item structure progresses logically from factual extraction (L1) to interpretation (L2) and evaluation (L3), in line with the CAPS' cognitive distribution for source-based assessment. The CAPS outlines that History assessments must integrate all three cognitive levels (L1–L3) and use diverse source types to develop learners' skills of interpretation, analysis, and evaluation. Essays also varied in their phrasing and emphasis while adhering to the standard extended-response format. The essay questions encourage critical thinking through evaluative stems such as "Do you agree?", "To what extent?", and "Critically discuss…", each prompting high-order reasoning.

The consistency in format ensured reliability, while variation in question focus, visual materials, and essay direction ensured that learners cannot rely on rote memorisation. This demonstrates acceptable predictability rooted in curriculum requirements rather than assessment design repetition.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that the skills paired with this topic have remained consistent with the CAPS expectations, focusing on interpretation, analysis, comparison, evaluation, and synthesis. In source-based questions, learners were required to interpret textual and visual evidence, assess its reliability and usefulness, and evaluate perspectives on resistance movements. These skills directly align with the CAPS' historical inquiry objectives, which emphasise "the ability to evaluate sources and construct evidence-based arguments."

For essays, the recurring skill focus is developing a substantiated line of argument, which requires synthesising factual and conceptual understanding. Each year's essay question demanded evaluative reasoning: in 2022, on the effectiveness of the Black Consciousness philosophy; in 2023, on psychological liberation; and in 2024, on the influence of Steve Biko. While the skill pairing remained stable, the cognitive demand varied through the rephrasing and recontextualisation of each question, ensuring a balanced assessment of historical thinking. This reflects an acceptable level of predictability, where the cognitive skills remain constant as required by the CAPS, but the contexts and interpretative angles changed annually.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The observed patterns indicate that the framing of this topic varied meaningfully across years. Each examination used new and contextually relevant real-life materials to frame the inquiry. In 2022, the focus was on the Mass Democratic Movement and its role in dismantling apartheid structures; in 2023, on labour movements and trade union resistance; and in 2024, on civic organisations' local mobilisation. The corresponding visual and textual sources, such as protest posters, union memoranda, and excerpts from community meetings, reflect authentic historical contexts rather than generic reproductions.

The essay questions were similarly framed within distinct analytical contexts. Each year's essay repositions the Black Consciousness philosophy in relation to shifting dimensions of empowerment and self-awareness, ensuring that learners approach the topic from new interpretive angles.

This dynamic use of scenario framing avoids unacceptable predictability by introducing new evidence and contexts annually. The DBE should continue sourcing contemporary and diverse archival materials to sustain both authenticity and variability in future assessments.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the DBE History Civil Resistance in South Africa, 1970s–1980s topic

Table 3.2.2 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability.

Table 3.2.2: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of the 2022–2024 DBE History Civil Resistance in South Africa, 1970s–1980s Topic Paper 2

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified. The topic appears in all three years because CAPS makes it compulsory for Paper 2. Its annual appearance reflects curriculum demand, not assessment predictability.
Identified unacceptable predictability on content coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Although the Black Consciousness Movement appears each year in the essay, the subtopics vary in conceptual focus (psychological empowerment, self-reliance, Biko's leadership), and source-based subtopics rotate across different resistance structures.
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage

Continue diversifying source themes to avoid reliance on a narrow set of resistance case studies.
Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Maintain alignment with the CAPS by rotating subtopics within the broader Civil Resistance theme each year. Continue introducing new archival sources and contemporary representations to broaden the historical perspectives learners engage with.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
None. Weighting is uniform (50 marks for source-based, 50 for essay) because CAPS prescribes equal weighting for all Paper 2 topics.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Retain the 50/50-mark distribution. Ensure variety in the distribution of marks across some of the source-based sub-questions (L1–L2) on extraction and interpretation.
Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
No unacceptable predictability was observed. Although item types (source-based and essay) remain constant as required by the CAPS, the design, source construction, and essay phrasing vary annually.
Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Retain the source-based structure mandated by the CAPS but continue diversifying source combinations and question stems. Maintain holistic essay assessment while varying argument direction and conceptual angle.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Skills assessed (interpretation, comparison, analysis, evaluation, synthesis) remain stable because the CAPS requires consistent development of historical inquiry skills.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing

Introduce more comparison-based or reliability-focused items in years where interpretation dominates, ensuring skill rotation within the CAPS limits.
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Continue mapping questions to the CAPS cognitive levels (L1–L3) to ensure balance. Sustain annual variation in the specific intellectual demands of higher-order sub-questions.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Real-life contexts used in 2022 to 2024 vary meaningfully (e.g., MDM protests, COSATU labour struggles, civic mobilisation), and the essays shift their interpretive focus annually.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.
Continue rotating scenarios within the broader topic to avoid repeating similar case studies. Incorporate a wider range of archival materials from underrepresented regions or resistance structures.
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Maintain the use of new, authentic, historically accurate case studies each year. Ensure that visual and textual sources are drawn from different archival settings annually.

Table 3.2.3 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability for the Coming of Democracy to South Africa and Coming to Terms with the Past topics in DBE History Paper 2 examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.2.3: Findings on the Predictability of the Coming of Democracy to South Africa and Coming to Terms with the Past Topic for the DBE History Paper 2 Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic: The Coming of Democracy to South Africa and Coming to Terms with the Past

Year	Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)	Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation	Overall weighting of the topic in marks	Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic	Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic	Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic	Skill assessed per subtopic
2022	✓	1. TRC: The role played by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and the TRC in promoting national healing between 1995 and 1998= 50		1. Source-based questions (testimonies, newspaper extracts, official TRC statements) = 50 Extraction = 14 Interpretation = 20 Comparison = 4 Usefulness = 4	1. Source-based: L1–L2 Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L1–L2 Comparison = L2 Usefulness = L2 Paragraph = L2	1. Source-based: L1–L3 Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L3 Usefulness = L3 Paragraph = L3	Source analysis (usefulness), contextual understanding of reconciliation, synthesis Interpretation of evidence, evaluation of bias, contextual understanding of TRC process,

			100	Paragraph Writing = 8			paragraph writing
		2. Road to democracy: Explores how compromises by different political role players paved the way for a new political dispensation in South Africa in 1994 = 50		2. Essay = 50	2. Essay: L2–L3 (synthesis and argument construction)	2. Essay: L3 (evaluation and synthesis)	Essay – Argument construction, historical evaluation of negotiation and compromise

2023	✓	1. TRC: Analyses on how the TRC exposed leaders of the apartheid government for human rights violations committed between 1960 and 1994 = 50		1. Source-based questions (TRC hearings, media reports, testimonies) Extraction = 14 Interpretation = 20 Comparison = 4 Usefulness =4 Paragraph Writing = 8	1. Source-based: L1–L2 Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L2 Usefulness = L2 Paragraph = L2	1. Source-based: L1–L3 Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L3 Usefulness = L3 Paragraph = L3	Source – critical interpretation of testimony, evaluation of moral accountability
		2. Road to Democracy: Examines how the transition to democracy in South Africa was marked by ongoing violence and		2. Essay = 50	2. Essay: L2 Middle-order analysis and synthesis	2. Essay: L3 (evaluation and synthesis)	2. Essay – Analytical synthesis of political violence, negotiation outcomes, and compromise

		conflict that failed to prevent the 1994 democratic elections = 50					
2024	✓	1. TRC: The extent to which the TRC was able to bring closure to the family of Sizwe Kondile, an anti-apartheid activist murdered in 1981 = 50	100	1. Source-based (TRC transcripts, testimonies, media articles) Extraction = 14 Interpretation = 20 Comparison = 4 Usefulness = 4 Paragraph Writing = 8	1. Source-based: L1–L2 Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L2 Usefulness = L2 Paragraph = L2	1. Source-based questions: Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L3 Usefulness = L3 Paragraph = L3	1. Source – comprehension, contextual evaluation, empathy-based analysis
		2. Road to democracy: Assessed how political		2. Essay= 50	2. Essay: L2 (conceptual evaluation)	2. Essay: L3	2. Essay – evaluation of negotiation process,

		parties, despite the violence during negotiations, were willing to compromise to establish the foundation for a democratic South Africa in 1994 = 50					synthesis of evidence-based arguments on compromise

Table 3.2.3 presents a comparative overview of the Coming of Democracy to South Africa and Coming to Terms with the Past topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.2.3 have contributed to the predictability of the DBE History Paper 2 final examination from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that the Coming of Democracy to South Africa and Coming to Terms with the Past were examined consistently across all three years (2022 to 2024) as Question 2 (source-based) and Question 5 (essay), fully aligned with Section 4 of the CAPS document, which prescribes this topic as a compulsory component of Paper 2. The annual appearance of this topic therefore reflects curriculum obligations rather than examination predictability.

Although the topic is fixed, the subtopics assessed within it vary considerably. In 2022, the source-based question centred on Archbishop Desmond Tutu's leadership role in the TRC.

In 2023, it shifted to the exposure of apartheid government abuses, and in 2024, it focused narrowly on the Sizwe Kondile case and whether the TRC brought closure to his family. Similarly, the essay subtopics rotate annually, ranging from political compromise (2022) to violence and conflict in the transition (2023) to negotiated settlement despite violence (2024). This variation ensures conceptual breadth and prevents content repetition. Given that the topic's yearly inclusion is CAPS-driven and its specific content focus changes each year, the frequency does not indicate unacceptable predictability. The DBE should continue maintaining mandatory annual inclusion while rotating subtopics and case studies within the broader framework to sustain variation.

b. Content coverage

The findings indicate that although Topic 2 was examined annually, the specific subtopics and content emphases demonstrate meaningful variation, preventing narrow or repetitive coverage. In 2022, the focus centres on leadership and reconciliation, drawing on Archbishop Desmond Tutu's role in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). In 2023, the emphasis shifted to perpetrator accountability, particularly how the TRC exposed leaders of the apartheid government for gross human rights violations committed between 1960 and 1994. By contrast, the 2024 paper adopted a victim-centred orientation, examining whether the TRC was able to provide closure to the family of Sizwe Kondile following his murder in 1981. This rotation of TRC-related content aligns with the CAPS expectations that learners engage with multiple dimensions of the TRC process, including "human rights violations, the purpose and significance of the TRC, and the complexities of reconciliation."

Similarly, while the essay subtopic consistently addresses the transition to democracy, the analytical angle varied considerably across the three years. In 2022, the essay foregrounded the compromises made by political role-players; in 2023, it focused on the persistence of violence and conflict during the negotiation period; and in 2024, it emphasised the parties' willingness to compromise

despite heightened violence. The recurrence of the overarching theme of the democratic transition was justified by the CAPS; however, the shifting angles ensured conceptual breadth and mitigated predictability. Consequently, there is no indication of unacceptable predictability in the content coverage for Topic 2. To maintain this positive pattern, it is recommended that the DBE continue to alternate among leadership perspectives, perpetrator accountability, human rights violations, victim experiences, and the evolving dynamics of negotiation and compromise.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the mark allocation for Topic 2 remained stable from 2022 to 2024, with 50 marks allocated to the source-based question and 50 marks to the essay, consistent with the CAPS policy for Paper 2 topics. This stability does not contribute to predictability, as uniform mark allocation is mandated to ensure fairness and standardisation across topics. Within the source-based questions, the internal distribution of marks across L1–L3 items also aligns with the CAPS prescriptions and shows no skewed patterns across years. The essay rubric (global 50-mark rubric) remains constant, as required for all essay questions. Since the weighting was fixed, there is no unacceptable predictability. This consistency should be maintained, while variation should continue to occur through the selection of case studies, thematic focuses, and evidence sets.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that, across the 2022 to 2024 examination cycle, the item types used to assess Topic 2 remained consistent with the structural requirements outlined in the CAPS policy, while still demonstrating meaningful variation in the design, framing, and cognitive orientation of both the source-based and essay questions. In all three years, the source-based questions employed a balanced combination of textual and visual evidence; however, the nature of these sources differed substantially from year to year. For example, the 2022 examination drew largely on leadership-focused material related to Archbishop Desmond Tutu and national reconciliation, whereas the 2023 examination shifted towards a more accountability-driven narrative centred on exposing

perpetrators of apartheid. By contrast, the 2024 examination adopted a victim-centred approach, foregrounding the experiences of the Kondile family in their pursuit of truth and closure. These distinct framing choices required learners to apply different interpretive and analytical skills, ranging from evaluating bias and reliability to contextualising testimony within broader human rights discourses.

Similarly, although the structure of the essay questions remained predictable, given that Topic 2 was always assessed through Question 5, the phrasing and analytical emphasis varied across the three years. The essays alternated between prompts requiring explanation ("Explain to what extent…"), critical engagement ("Critically discuss…"), and evaluative judgement ("Do you agree…?"), thereby preventing formulaic preparation and ensuring that learners engaged substantively with the complexities of negotiation, compromise, and conflict in the transition to democracy. This variation in item phrasing also shifted the cognitive expectations, as learners had to adjust their argumentation strategies in response to the specific command verbs used in each year.

Together, these patterns indicate that, although the overarching item types remained structurally stable as required by the CAPS, the internal variation in content framing, source selection, cognitive orientation, and essay phrasing ensured that Topic 2 does not exhibit unacceptable predictability. Instead, the assessments maintained an appropriate balance between reliability and variation. To support continued diversity in future examination cycles, it is recommended that the DBE further broaden the range of TRC case studies and negotiation events selected for source-based and essay questions, thereby sustaining contextual richness and avoiding content repetition.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that the skill demands associated with Topic 2 have remained strongly aligned with the CAPS expectations while indicating sufficient variation across the three years to avoid undesirable predictability. In all examination cycles, the source-based questions required learners to engage with key historical inquiry skills such as interpreting evidence, analysing

perspectives, evaluating bias, assessing reliability and usefulness, and synthesising information, which are clearly prescribed in the CAPS for source-based assessment. However, the skill–subtopic pairing shifted each year meaningfully, reflecting the changing narrative emphasis within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) theme. For instance, the 2022 examination paired leadership-oriented skills with the role of Archbishop Desmond Tutu; the 2023 paper foregrounded evaluative and analytical skills by focusing on exposing apartheid perpetrators; and the 2024 paper required more interpretive and empathetic reasoning through its emphasis on the Sizwe Kondile case and family closure.

Similarly, the essay questions required higher-order synthesis and argumentation (L3), but the nature of the argument varied across the years. In 2022, learners evaluated compromise and political negotiation; in 2023, they critically assessed how violence shaped the transition; and in 2024, they assessed multi-party willingness to compromise despite violence. Although the overarching cognitive skill of constructing a substantiated line of argument is consistent with CAPS requirements, the shifting analytical angle ensures conceptual variation.

Overall, the findings indicate acceptable predictability driven by curriculum design rather than assessment repetition. The cognitive skills remained stable to ensure alignment with the CAPS, but the framing, evidence base, and argumentative direction of questions varied sufficiently. To maintain this balance, the assessment body should continue to rotate TRC cases, negotiation phases, and political actors to broaden the contexts in which skills can be applied while safeguarding the core historical thinking skills required for Paper 2.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The patterns observed indicate that the scenario framing of Topic 2 indicated substantial variation across the three-year period, thereby avoiding undesirable predictability and supporting rich historical engagement. The CAPS emphasises the use of "authentic historical sources" and diverse perspectives to develop learners' understanding of democratic transition and restorative justice, and

the DBE examinations consistently reflect this requirement. Each year employs new scenarios, grounded in different TRC hearings, testimonies, and political contexts, which broaden learners' interpretive frames. In 2022, the scenario centred on Archbishop Tutu's leadership and the moral framing of national reconciliation; in 2023, the focus shifted to the exposure of apartheid perpetrators and the public revelation of human rights abuses; and in 2024, the scenario focused on the emotionally complex and victim-centred search for closure in the case of Sizwe Kondile. These changes ensured that learners could not anticipate the specific narrative thread or historical actors that would be foregrounded in the TRC inquiry.

The essay questions similarly reflected variation in scenario framing. Although the overarching theme of negotiations and democratic transition remains constant, as prescribed by the CAPS, the scenarios differ in their emphasis on compromise, violence, political instability, and the actions of key role-players. Each year presented a unique contextual problem that learners must interpret and address through argumentation, preventing reliance on memorised templates and encouraging deeper engagement with the historical processes of transition.

Consequently, the contextual framing of Topic 2 does not demonstrate unacceptable predictability. Instead, it reflects a well-balanced equilibrium between curricular consistency and contextual variation. To maintain this positive trend, the DBE should continue incorporating diverse TRC cases, negotiation events, political actors, and historically grounded scenarios to sustain authenticity and conceptual breadth across examination cycles.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the DBE History: the Coming of Democracy to South Africa and Coming to Terms with the Past topic

Table 3.2.4 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability.

Table 3.2.4: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of the 2022–2024 DBE History the Coming of Democracy to South Africa and Coming to Terms with the Past Topic Paper 2

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified. The annual appearance of Topic 2 reflects the CAPS requirements rather than repetitive assessment design.
The assessment body should continue to vary the TRC focus areas and rotate negotiation sub-themes to maintain alignment with CAPS while preventing narrow repetition.
Identified unacceptable predictability on content coverage
No unacceptable predictability was observed. Although the TRC is assessed each year, the subtopics shift meaningfully, from leadership and reconciliation to perpetrator accountability, to victim-centred investigations.
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage
The DBE should continue to select diverse TRC cases, testimonies, and historical events that illuminate different dimensions of human rights violations, reconciliation, and transitional justice.
Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper

The assessment body should ensure that TRC cases alternate among leadership narratives, victim perspectives, and examinations of the justice system, and that essays continue to rotate negotiation themes such as compromise, violence, conflict resolution, and political strategy.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
No unacceptable predictability was identified. The weighting remains consistent at 50 marks for the source-based question and 50 marks for the essay, as prescribed by CAPS.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
The DBE should continue adhering to CAPS weighting while ensuring variation in the internal distribution of L1–L3 items, as well as in the design of source-based and essay prompts**.**
Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
No unacceptable predictability was found. Although the structure of source-based questions is predictable due to CAPS guidelines, the item framing, source selection, and analytical requirements vary substantially.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types
The DBE should continue diversifying the types of TRC sources used (e.g., testimonies, confessions, media reports, victim statements) and maintain variation in essay question stems.
Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Maintain consistent structure but vary the narrative focus, introduce new archival materials, and rotate the complexity and wording of questions within the L1–L3 cognitive framework.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
No unacceptable predictability was detected. Skills such as interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and argumentation are consistently assessed, but the contexts in which they are applied change meaningfully.

Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
Continue pairing high-order evaluative skills with different TRC case studies and negotiation sub-themes to prevent mechanical or rehearsed answering.
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Ensure annual variation in the angles of analysis demanded by essay questions and maintain diversity in the interpretive demands of source-based items.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Scenario framing changes annually and includes leadership narratives, perpetrator accountability, and victim-focused cases.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.
Continue selecting unique TRC cases, diverse historical testimonies, and varied representations of democratic transition events.
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Use a wide range of real historical incidents, archival records, and TRC hearings to ensure that each examination reflects new and authentic scenario contexts.

Table 3.2.5 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability for the End of the Cold War and a New World Order, 1989 to the Present topic for DBE History Paper 2 examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.2.5: Findings on the Predictability of the End of the Cold War and a New World Order, 1989 to the Present Topic for the DBE History Paper 2 Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic: The End of the Cold War and a New World Order, 1989 to the Present							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**
2022	✓	1. Globalisation: The commitment of developing countries within BRICS to global climate change issues between 2000 and 2021 = 50	100	1. Source-based questions: (articles, climate data, economic reports) = 50 Extraction = 14 Interpretation = 20 Comparison = 4	1. Source-based questions: L1–L2 Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L2	1. Source-based: L1–L3 Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L3 Usefulness = L3 Paragraph = L3	Source – Data interpretation, contextual understanding of global governance, extracting information, interpretation of sources

				Usefulness = 4 Paragraph Writing = 8	Usefulness = L2 Paragraph = L2		
		2. The reforms of Gorbachev: Analyses of how Gorbachev's policy changes in the Soviet Union from 1985 led to its disintegration in 1991, while also influencing political developments in South Africa = 50		2. Essay = 50	2. Essay L2 (evaluation and synthesis)	2. Essay: L3	Essay – Evaluation of Gorbachev's reforms and their global impact, synthesis of comparative analysis
2023	✓	1. Globalisation: The influence of the IMF and World Bank in shaping globalised	100	1. Source-based questions: Policy statements, economic data, articles = 50	1. Source-based questions: L1–L2	1. Source-based: L1–L3	Source – Economic reasoning, interpretation of policy impacts

		economies since the 1980s = 50		Extraction = 14 Interpretation= 20 Comparison = 4 Usefulness = 4 Paragraph Writing = 8	Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L2 Usefulness = L2 Paragraph = L2	Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L3 Usefulness = L3 Paragraph = L3	
		2. The reforms of Gorbachev: Evaluation of how Gorbachev's reforms of Perestroika and Glasnost contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 = 50 marks		2. Essay= 50	2. Essay: L2 (analysis and synthesis)	2. Essay L3	Essay – Cause-effect reasoning, critical argumentation on reform outcomes

2024	✓	1. Globalisation: The resistance to Walmart's expansion into South Africa in 2011 as a reflection of globalisation and local economic concerns= 50	100	1. Source-based questions: Media articles, economic commentaries, visuals = 50 Extraction = 14 Interpretation= 20 Comparison = 4 Usefulness = 4 Paragraph Writing = 8	1. Source-based question: L1–L2 Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L2 Usefulness = L2 Paragraph = L2	1. Source-based: L1–L3 Extraction = L1 Interpretation = L2 Comparison = L3 Usefulness = L3 Paragraph = L3	Source – Economic interpretation, comparative global analysis
		2. The road to democracy: Critical examination of how Gorbachev's political and economic reforms in the mid-1980s		2. Essay = 50	2. Essay: L2 evaluation and synthesis	2. Essay: L3	Essay – Evaluation of reform policies, synthesis of global consequences and Cold War resolution

		led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and ultimately the End of the Cold War in 1991 = 50					

Table 3.2.5 presents a comparative overview of the End of the Cold War and a New World Order, 1989 to the Present topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.2.5 have contributed to the predictability of the DBE History Paper 2 final examination from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that Topic 3 recurred across all three examination years (2022 to 2024) in alignment with the CAPS, which prescribes that "The End of the Cold War and a New World Order" must be examined annually through one source-based question (Question 3) and one essay question (Question 6) in History Paper 2 (DBE, 2011, p. 33-34). Although the topic was assessed each year, the content emphasis and analytical direction differed substantially across the cycle, thereby preventing undesirable predictability.

The source-based questions shifted from a global climate governance context through the BRICS responses to climate change in 2022, to the influence of international financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank on globalised economies in 2023, and finally to the resistance to Walmart's expansion into South Africa in 2011 as an example of global economic integration in 2024. These shifts demonstrate a clear diversification of subtopics within the broader Globalisation framework prescribed by the CAPS, ensuring that learners were exposed to different dimensions of International Relations and global economic developments.

Similarly, the essay component appeared annually, but the analytical focus changed each year while remaining within the CAPS expectations that learners must examine the political and economic reforms introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev and their global implications. In 2022, the essay explored how Gorbachev's reforms contributed to both the collapse of the Soviet Union and political shifts in South Africa. In 2023, the emphasis moved towards evaluating the extent to which Glasnost and Perestroika precipitated the disintegration of the Soviet Union. In 2024, learners were required to discuss how these reforms ultimately accelerated the End of the Cold War in 1991. This pattern indicates a stable connection to the CAPS topic, yet sufficient variation in interpretive angle, argumentative stance and conceptual framing. Therefore, although Topic 3 was examined with annual consistency, this is considered acceptable predictability because it is mandated by the CAPS rather than resulting from repetitive assessment design. To maintain this balance, it is recommended that future cycles continue rotating subtopics within the broader Globalisation and Cold War frameworks to preserve both curriculum alignment and conceptual breadth.

b. Content coverage

The findings indicate that although Topic 3 appeared each year, the specific content subtopics demonstrate meaningful variation, thereby avoiding narrow or repetitive coverage. The source-based content shifted annually within the broader framework of the Cold War and Globalisation. The 2022 paper assessed environmental diplomacy and collective responsibilities through the climate change commitments of BRICS countries. The 2023 paper focused on economic Globalisation by analysing the impact of international financial institutions on developing economies. The 2024 paper explored corporate Globalisation through the lens of resistance to Walmart's entry into South Africa. This rotation reflects the broad range of content identified in the CAPS, which emphasises "the new world order, globalisation, and international political and economic developments since 1989" (DBE, 2011, p. 34).

Similarly, the essays consistently examined the collapse of the Soviet Union and the End of the Cold War, yet each year introduced a different analytical angle. In 2022, the essay required learners to evaluate the impact of Gorbachev's reforms on both the USSR and South African politics. In 2023, the focus narrowed to the internal effects of Perestroika and Glasnost on the USSR's collapse. In 2024, the essay broadened its perspective again to assess how Gorbachev's reforms led to the disintegration of the Soviet Union and ultimately the End of the Cold War. This variation within a stable thematic frame aligned with the CAPS expectations and prevents repetition. Consequently, no unacceptable predictability was observed in content coverage. To maintain this, future assessments should continue exploring different facets of Globalisation, International Relations, and Cold War consequences.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the weight assigned to Topic 3 remained consistent over the three-year period. In each examination cycle, the source-based question was allocated 50 marks, while the corresponding essay question was also allocated 50 marks. This structure reflects the CAPS directive that each Paper 2 topic must be evaluated using one source-based item and one essay, each weighted equally. The stability of weighting does not contribute to undesirable predictability because it is intended to ensure fairness, comparability, and alignment across examination cycles. Within the source-based questions, the internal distribution of marks across cognitive levels aligns with the CAPS guidelines, in which lower-order questions assess comprehension, middle-order questions assess interpretation, and higher-order questions require evaluation and synthesis. The essay questions are marked holistically using the DBE's global rubric, which is designed to promote consistent assessment of argument development and evidence synthesis. Since the weighting pattern is mandated and essential for standardisation, it should be maintained. Variation should instead be achieved through changes in subtopic selection, source framing, and essay emphasis.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that across the 2022 to 2024 period, Topic 3 demonstrated consistency in item structure while presenting meaningful variation in the types of sources, the framing of questions, and the cognitive demands embedded in each instrument. The source-based questions employed diverse evidence forms, including statistical data, economic reports, political commentary, and media extracts, each requiring distinct inferential and analytical skills. The 2022 question drew on climate-related data and policy statements, encouraging interpretation of global environmental commitments. The 2023 question relied on financial and economic texts about the IMF and World Bank, prompting analysis of economic reasoning, while the 2024 question incorporated articles and commentary on Walmart's expansion, requiring learners to evaluate Globalisation in a corporate context. Although the structural progression from basic extraction to high-level evaluation remained stable to meet the CAPS requirements, the shifting nature of the sources influences how difficulty is distributed each year.

The essay questions similarly maintained consistent structural expectations while varying in conceptual focus. Each essay used evaluative stems such as "Critically discuss," "Explain to what extent," and "Support your line of argument," which required learners to demonstrate high-order reasoning. However, the framing shifted from South African impact (2022) to internal Soviet reforms (2023) and then to broader global implications (2024). Overall, there is no evidence of unacceptable predictability across item types, as the variety of sources and shifting analytical focus ensure continuous variation. The DBE is encouraged to maintain this diversity by incorporating a balance of the political, economic, and social dimensions of Globalisation, as well as the consequences of the Cold War.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that the skills paired with Topic 3 have remained consistent with the CAPS expectations yet varied enough to prevent predictability. Across all three years, the source-based questions required learners to demonstrate interpretation,

comparative reasoning, contextual analysis, evaluation of reliability, and synthesis of economic and political information. These skills align explicitly with the CAPS emphasis on developing learners' ability to evaluate sources, interpret global events, and understand contrasting perspectives. Although the same broad skill set was applied annually, the nature of each year's source material required different sub-skills. For example, the 2022 BRICS climate sources required environmental interpretation, the 2023 IMF and World Bank documents required economic analysis, and the 2024 Walmart sources required socio-economic interpretation. Similarly, essays consistently required evaluative argumentation, yet the analytical direction shifted annually, ensuring the skill-to-concept pairing does not become predictable. There was no evidence of unacceptable repetition because the variation in global contexts demands new applications of historical skills each year. To maintain this balance, the DBE should continue rotating Globalisation angles and Cold War-related case studies.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The observed patterns indicate that the framing of Topic 3 questions was sufficiently varied to avoid predictability. Each year drew on distinct and authentic real-world contexts, ensuring that learners were exposed to diverse representations of global political and economic developments. The 2022 climate change scenario situated the analysis within environmental diplomacy, the 2023 scenario involved international financial institutions shaping national economies, and the 2024 scenario focused on corporate Globalisation through Walmart's expansion. This rotation across environmental, economic, and corporate contexts prevented learners from anticipating specific case studies and reinforced the multidimensional nature of Globalisation described in the CAPS. The essays likewise varied in contextual framing, ranging from the internal collapse of the USSR to its ripple effects on South Africa and the wider global system. Since the scenario framing remained dynamic and contextually rich, no unacceptable predictability was observed. The DBE should continue to diversify the contextual framing by incorporating additional global case studies, such as technological globalisation or geopolitical realignments.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the DBE History: The End of the Cold War and a New World Order, 1989 to the Present topic

Table 3.2.6 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability.

Table 3.2.6: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of the 2022–2024 DBE History: The End of the Cold War and a New World Order, 1989 to the Present Topic Paper 2

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Topic 3 appeared each year in Question 3 (source-based) and Question 6 (essay), as required by the CAPS, making this topic compulsory for Paper 2.
Identified unacceptable predictability on content coverage
No unacceptable predictability was detected. The subtopics varied substantially each year: BRICS and climate change (2022), IMF and World Bank influence (2023), and Walmart–Massmart globalisation dynamics (2024). Essay questions also varied annually in their analytical focus on Gorbachev's reforms.
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage
Continue diversifying subtopics by incorporating additional CAPS-aligned content such as regional conflicts, shifts in global power blocs, or technological drivers of globalisation.
Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Ensure that each examination draws from a different dimension of the post-Cold War world (economic, political, or social). Maintain the current rotation of global case studies to ensure conceptual breadth
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic weighting

No unacceptable predictability was identified. The topic consistently carries 50 marks for the source-based question and 50 marks for the essay, in accordance with CAPS requirements.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Preserve the required 50/50 distribution while varying the internal distribution of L1 sub-questions and the emphasis placed on interpretation, comparison, and evaluation within the source-based questions.
Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
No unacceptable predictability occurred. The papers maintained the required source-based format but used different kinds of sources and varying analytical demands each year. Essays also changed their evaluative framing.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types
Incorporate a wider mix of economic data, policy extracts, and media commentary, particularly in questions dealing with global economic restructuring.
Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Continue alternating between narrative, data-driven, and visual sources in the source-based question. Maintain variation in essay phrasing and analytical emphasis (e.g., to what extent, critical discussion, and do you agree?).
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
No unacceptable predictability was observed. Although Topic 3 consistently assesses the same high-order skills (evaluation, synthesis, and interpretation), the contextual application of these skills varies annually.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
Expand the range of comparative and interpretive skills assessed, such as evaluating international institutions' long-term impact or assessing contradictions within the New World Order.
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper

Continue embedding higher-order skills within changing contexts to ensure learners must apply skills rather than recall content patterns.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items
No unacceptable predictability was found. Scenario framing changed each year significantly, moving from global climate issues (2022) to structural adjustment and globalisation (2023), and finally to corporate expansion into South Africa (2024).
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Use diverse real-life contexts that reflect evolving global dynamics, including changing power blocs, international conflicts, and economic interdependence.

Conclusions

The evaluation indicates that the History Paper 2 examinations for the period 2022 to 2024 do not display any unacceptable forms of predictability. Although the three prescribed topics recurred annually, this pattern reflects CAPS-mandated structural consistency rather than repetitive or anticipatory assessment design. Within this stable framework, substantial variation is maintained across all topics in terms of subtopic selection, contextual framing, source types, essay focus, and cognitive demands. For instance, Topic 1 shifted across different strands of resistance, including the Mass Democratic Movement, COSATU, and civic organisations. Topic 2 alternated between leadership-driven reconciliation, perpetrator accountability, and victim-focused TRC case studies. Topic 3 varied its Globalisation themes by examining BRICS climate politics, the IMF/World Bank's influence, and corporate expansion into South Africa. Similarly, the essays demonstrated conceptual diversity each year, requiring distinct lines of argument even while remaining anchored in the same overarching CAPS topics.

Therefore, while the structural design of the paper was predictable, as the CAPS requires one source-based question and one essay for each topic, the internal content and assessment focus differed sufficiently from year to year to prevent rote learning or accurate prediction of specific subtopics. This balance supports the CAPS intention to develop historical inquiry skills, critical thinking, and evidence-based reasoning. As a result, the level of predictability observed in the question papers is acceptable and contributes positively to fairness, curriculum alignment, and the validity of the overall assessment.

3.3: HISTORY PAPER 1

This section presents an analysis of the IEB final examination question papers from 2022 to 2024 for History Paper 1 topics. The findings for each topic are summarised in Tables 3.3.1–3.3.6.

Table 3.3.1 below summarises the analysis conducted to assess the level of predictability of the Cold War (1945–1990) topic for IEB History Paper 1 examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.3.1: Findings on the Predictability of the Cold War (1945–1990) Topic for the IEB History Paper 1 Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic 1: The Cold War (1945–1990)							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**

2022	✓	1. Vietnam War: The success of the United States' military strategies in the Vietnam War from 1963 to 1972 = 70	100	1. Discursive Essay = 70	1. Discursive Essay = L3	1. Discursive Essay: = L6	Argumentation, interpretation, synthesis, contextual analysis
		1. Cuban Missile Crisis – Causes, superpower actions, outcomes = 30		2. Extended writing with source stimulus = 30	2. Extended Writing = L2	2. Extended writing = L4	Cause-effect explanation

2023	✓	1. Berlin & Cold War tensions A divided Germany was a contributing factor to Cold War tensions = 70	100	1. Discursive Essay = 70	1. Discursive Essay = L3	1. Discursive Essay: = L6	Analysis of geopolitical tensions, synthesis of multi-period events
		2. Sino-Soviet Split relationship, changes under Mao & Khrushchev, impact = 30		2. Extended Writing with source stimulus = 30	2. Extended Writing = L2	2. Extended Writing = L4	Interpretation of ideological conflict

2024	✓	1. Soviet influence in Cuba (1959–1962) = 70	100	1. Discursive Essay = 70	1. Discursive Essay = L3	1. Discursive Essay = L6	Critical evaluation, contextualisation, argument construction
		2. US sphere of influence in Europe, 1945–1955 = 30		2. Extended writing with source stimulus = 30	2. Extended Writing = L2	2. Extended Writing = L4	Source-supported explanation

Table 3.3.1 presents a comparative overview of the Cold War topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.3.1 have contributed to the predictability of the IEB History Paper 1 final examination from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that Topic 1, which aligns with the Cold War and post-1945 international conflict themes as prescribed in the IEB SAGs, was examined consistently across the 2022 to 2024 assessment cycle. In accordance with the SAG, Paper 1 must examine three prescribed themes through Section A discursive essays and Section B extended writing tasks. In each examination cycle, although the specific case studies varied, Topic 1 appeared in both sections without exception.

In Section A (Discursive Essays), the evaluator noted that Topic 1 was represented annually through a high-order, argument-driven essay requiring 800–900 words. In 2022, the topic focused on the Vietnam War; in 2023, the focus shifted to Berlin and Cold War tensions; and in 2024, the examination assessed the Soviet sphere of influence in Cuba. These case studies fall within the broader Cold War theme prescribed by the IEB SAG, demonstrating consistent representation of the overarching topic while varying the historical setting. In Section B (Extended Writing), Topic 1 also appeared each year, but through different stimulus-based subtopics. In 2022, the extended writing examined the Cuban Missile Crisis; in 2023, it focused on the Sino-Soviet Split; and in 2024, it assessed the United States' sphere of influence in Europe by 1955. This confirms that Topic 1 retains its structural place across the three years, but the internal selection of case studies changes annually.

The evaluator therefore concluded that while Topic 1 appeared with full frequency across the cycle, consistent with IEB requirements, its appearance did not demonstrate unacceptable predictability. The observed stability reflects curriculum-driven expectations outlined in the SAG rather than the design of repetitive questions. To maintain this acceptable level of variation, the assessment body should continue rotating case studies within the broader Cold War theme and avoid returning to the same focal studies in consecutive years.

b. Content coverage

The findings indicate that Cold War content coverage varied widely across the 2022 to 2024 examination cycle, as each paper drew on distinct subtopics, geopolitical regions, and historical turning points, ensuring that learners engaged with a wide range of the Cold War case studies rather than encountering narrow or repetitive patterns. In Section A, although the discursive essays consistently targeted high-level Cold War themes, the focus shifted meaningfully each year, beginning with an assessment of the effectiveness of United States military strategies in Vietnam (1963–1972) in 2022, moving to an evaluation of how a divided Germany contributed

to Cold War tensions (1945–1961) in 2023, and then examining the Soviet Union's success in creating a sphere of influence in Cuba (1959–1962) in 2024. This progression reflects a deliberate rotation among Asia, Europe, and the Caribbean, aligning with the IEB SAGs, which require that discursive essays assess higher-order reasoning across diverse international contexts.

Similarly, Section B demonstrated substantial variation through its extended-writing questions, which explored the Cuban Missile Crisis in 2022 through its origins, superpower actions and consequences; the Sino–Soviet Split in 2023 through changing bilateral relations and its global impact; and the creation of a United States sphere of influence in Europe by 1955 in 2024 through reconstruction efforts, the Marshall Plan and NATO. Collectively, these questions represent three entirely different geopolitical arenas, with no overlap in countries, events, or thematic angles. Consequently, the evaluators concluded that there was no evidence of unacceptable predictability in Cold War content coverage; instead, the pattern reflects a conscious effort by the IEB to ensure broad representation of the Cold War events in accordance with SAG requirements that Paper 1 must examine a range of historical contexts. To preserve this high standard of variation, it is recommended that future papers continue alternating Cold War case studies across different world regions and avoid returning to the same event such as Cuba or Vietnam within short examination cycles, thereby maintaining breadth of coverage and preventing emerging predictability.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the weighting allocated to the Cold War topic remained stable across the three-year cycle, in accordance with the structure prescribed in the IEB SAGs. The guidelines stipulate that Paper 1 consists of one discursive essay (70 marks) drawn from each of the three prescribed themes and one extended-writing task (30 marks) for each theme. This structure was consistently maintained in 2022, 2023, and 2024, resulting in a fixed total of 100 marks per paper.

Although the overall mark allocation was constant, the internal distribution of cognitive and conceptual emphasis within the Cold War questions varied from year to year. In Section A, the Cold War essay consistently allocated 70 marks, yet the cognitive demands differed depending on the thematic framing. For example, in 2022, the essay required an evaluation of US military strategies in Vietnam; in 2023, the focus shifted to the German division and tensions in Berlin; and in 2024, the emphasis moved to Soviet influence in Cuba. These shifts altered the analytical depth required and therefore diversified the cognitive workload within the stable weighting allocation. In Section B, the extended writing task was consistently allocated 30 marks across the three years, but the distribution of sub-questions and factual demands varied by case study. In 2022, the task examined the Cuban Missile Crisis; in 2023, it focused on the Sino–Soviet Split; and in 2024, it assessed US influence in Western Europe. Although the allocation of marks for each sub-question typically remains balanced, the factual density and reasoning requirements vary because each case study involves unique historical contexts and causal chains.

The evaluator found no evidence of unacceptable predictability regarding weighting. The stable distribution of marks is a structural requirement of the IEB assessment design and therefore reflects procedural consistency rather than content predictability. The variation in cognitive expectations under the fixed weighting further supports the conclusion that the Cold War topic is not examined repetitively. To avoid potential predictability in future papers, the evaluator recommends that the IEB continues to retain the structural weighting prescribed in the IEB SAG while ensuring ongoing variation in the internal distribution of analytical demands and thematic angles. If maintained, this balance will preserve the integrity of the weighting system while preventing the emergence of patterns that may allow candidates to anticipate the conceptual direction of the Cold War questions.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that the item types used to assess Cold War content across the 2022 to 2024 examination cycle demonstrated consistent structural stability, as required by the IEB SAGs, while also reflecting meaningful variation in design, cognitive

demand, and contextual framing. In Section A, the discursive essay questions required higher-order cognitive engagement in each year, but the phrasing and analytical expectations differed notably. While all three questions demanded critical evaluation, they directed candidates to assess different dimensions such as the effectiveness of military strategies, the contribution of geopolitical division to rising tensions, or the success of foreign policy interventions. These shifts required candidates to construct distinct lines of argument and engage with different historiographical interpretations rather than applying memorised templates.

In Section B, the item types remained structurally consistent, with each extended-writing task comprising three sub-questions guided by a stimulus source. However, the variation across years is evident in the types of stimuli used and the nature of the sub-questions. The 2022 paper used a Cold War political cartoon to orient candidates to events in the Caribbean; the 2023 paper used a cartoon related to the Sino–Soviet conflict; and the 2024 paper used a Soviet propaganda cartoon to initiate an analysis of United States influence in Europe. Although the structure remained constant, the underlying cognitive demands varied because each stimulus required different interpretive approaches, including understanding symbolism, identifying ideological perspectives, and contextualising political messaging. The mark allocation for Section A essays remained constant at 70 marks across the three years, in accordance with the IEB SAG requirement that discursive essays assess higher-order reasoning. Similarly, the extended-writing questions in Section B were consistently allocated 30 marks and targeted lower-order cognitive skills, such as factual recall, explanation, and narrative construction. Although the weighting remained fixed, the cognitive distribution across tasks varied over the years because different Cold War events required different types of explanation, causal analysis, and contextualisation.

Over the three years, the difficulty levels across item types varied with the complexity of the historical contexts assessed. For instance, analysing the multifaceted dynamics of the Sino–Soviet split required a different level of conceptual engagement from assessing the consequences of the Cuban Missile Crisis or evaluating the creation of a United States sphere of influence in Europe. These variations prevented predictable patterns in task difficulty and sustained the validity of assessment.

Considering the overall pattern, the evaluator determined that the assessment of the Cold War concepts did not follow a predictable trajectory. Although the structural format of the items remained consistent, the shifts in question phrasing, stimulus selection, and cognitive emphasis ensured substantial variation. No unacceptable predictability was identified. To maintain this balanced approach, the IEB should continue to diversify stimulus materials and ensure that analytical angles within both Sections A and B shift across examination cycles to prevent repetition.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that pairing Cold War subtopics with specific cognitive skills remained varied and aligned with the expectations outlined in the IEB SAGs. In Section A, the discursive essays consistently targeted higher-order reasoning, requiring candidates to demonstrate analysis, interpretation, synthesis, and the construction of sustained arguments. Although this higher-order focus remained constant, the skill demands shifted annually because each Cold War theme required a different analytical approach. In 2022, the Vietnam War question required evaluating military strategies and their effectiveness, encouraging comparative reasoning and cause-and-effect analysis. In 2023, the Berlin question required the examination of political tensions and structural divisions, placing greater emphasis on multi-layered interpretation and contextual analysis. In 2024, the Cuban sphere-of-influence question foregrounded diplomatic interpretation and the assessment of ideological expansion, resulting in a different pattern of analytical engagement.

A similar pattern of variation was evident in Section B. Although extended-writing questions targeted lower-order cognitive skills as mandated by the IEB SAGs, the required skills differed because each Cold War subtopic demanded a distinct factual lens. The 2022 Cuban Missile Crisis question required chronological reconstruction and factual explanation. The 2023 Sino–Soviet Split question required explanation of leadership developments, ideological divergence, and key events. The 2024 Marshall Plan question required identification and explanation of economic actions, policy shifts, and their Cold War significance. Therefore, while skills such as

factual recall, explanation, and sequencing were consistently assessed, they manifested differently across the three years because of the changing thematic focus.

Overall, the evaluator found no evidence of unacceptable predictability in the pairing of the Cold War topics with cognitive skills. The skills remained consistent with IEB requirements, yet the diversity of historical contexts prevented repetition of identical skill demands across years. To avoid predictability, it is recommended that the examination continue to rotate Cold War subtopics across regions and historical developments, as this naturally introduces variation in the required skills. Conversely, since the balance between higher-order discursive essays and lower-order extended writing remains appropriate, and in line with the IEB SAGs, this structure should be maintained to preserve the integrity and cognitive balance of Paper 1.

Overall, the evaluator found no evidence of unacceptable predictability in the pairing of the Cold War topics with cognitive skills. The skills remained consistent with IEB requirements, yet the diversity of historical contexts prevented repetition of identical skill demands across years. To avoid predictability, it is recommended that the examination continue to rotate Cold War subtopics across regions and historical developments, as this naturally introduces variation in the required skills. Conversely, since the balance between higher-order discursive essays and lower-order extended writing remains appropriate, and in line with the IEB SAGs, this structure should be maintained to preserve the integrity and cognitive balance of Paper 1.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The analysis indicated that the scenario framing of the Cold War questions in Paper 1 displayed consistent diversity across the three-year cycle. Each examination contextualised the Cold War through historically accurate, discipline-appropriate stimuli drawn from different geopolitical settings, thereby preventing a narrow or repetitive framing. In Section A, the discursive essay questions did not use visual or textual scenarios; however, they were consistently embedded in clearly defined historical contexts. These contexts shifted annually, moving from American military intervention in Vietnam in 2022 to the division of Berlin in 2023 to Soviet-Cuban

relations in 2024. This pattern illustrates deliberate variation in the framing of higher-order analytical tasks, which aligns with the IEB SAGs' requirement that discursive essays must promote independent argumentation across varied historical contexts.

In Section B, where scenario framing is more explicit, each extended-writing question incorporated a visual source that introduced a distinct historical event. In 2022, learners engaged with a political cartoon on the Cuban Missile Crisis. In 2023, the paper used a cartoon depicting conflict between Mao and Khrushchev to contextualise the Sino–Soviet Split. In 2024, the framing shifted to a Soviet cartoon illustrating the United States' economic and political influence in Western Europe after 1945. Although each question followed the standard structure of providing a single stimulus with three sub-questions, the historical settings, actors, and source types differed significantly. The evaluator therefore found that the scenario framing varied meaningfully and that no single visual genre, region, or narrative was repeated over the period.

In considering predictability, the findings confirm that the contextual framing of the Cold War questions did not present any unacceptable patterns. The scenarios changed annually, the visual sources were sourced from different origins, and the framing foregrounded distinct Cold War dynamics each year. Therefore, the contextual dimension of assessment in Topic 1 does not contribute to predictability. To prevent emerging patterns in future assessment cycles, it is recommended that the IEB continue to select stimuli from varied Cold War settings, including political cartoons, photographs, and posters from different global regions. This will preserve the current level of variation while maintaining alignment with the IEB SAG requirement that stimulus material should guide but not dominate learners' responses. At the same time, where the scenario framing already demonstrates acceptable variation, this practice should be maintained to ensure sustained fairness, validity, and alignment with the diverse content expectations outlined in the CAPS.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the IEB History Cold War topic

Table 3.3.2 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability

Table 3.3.2: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of the 2022–2024 IEB History Cold War Topic Paper 1

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Topic 1 appeared annually in line with the IEB SAGs, but the specific Cold War subtopics changed each year completely and did not repeat.
Identified unacceptable predictability on content coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Although the broader Cold War theme recurred, each year assessed a different region, event, and historical period with no recurrence of the same subtopic.
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage
The selection of Cold War case studies should continue to rotate across different geopolitical regions and historical turning points. The examiner should avoid returning to the same event, such as Cuba or Vietnam, within short intervals.
Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Cold War content should continue to draw on a wide range of themes, including superpower interventions, proxy wars, ideological confrontations, and economic diplomacy. This approach aligns with the IEB SAG expectation that Paper 1 must examine a range of international contexts.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic weighting

No unacceptable predictability was identified. Weighting remained constant because the IEB structure prescribes a fixed allocation of marks: 70 marks for the discursive essay and 30 marks for the extended writing task.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
The examiner should continue to apply the prescribed mark allocation while ensuring that the distribution of cognitive demands across the questions remains varied, particularly in the extended writing prompts.
Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
No unacceptable predictability was identified. While item types remained structurally stable according to IEB policy, the internal framing, command words, and cognitive emphases varied considerably across the three years.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types
The examiner should continue varying the stimulus sources, command terms, and the framing of sub-questions in extended writing. Discursive essay prompts should retain diverse analytical angles**.**
Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Stimulus sources should continue to include visual and textual materials from different Cold War regions and contexts. Discursive essays should rotate among political, ideological, military, and diplomatic lenses.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Skills such as analysis, evaluation, contextual explanation, and synthesis were required each year but were applied to different Cold War subtopics, ensuring variation.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
The pairing of cognitive skills with new Cold War contexts should continue. Similar skills should be applied to varied events to prevent any pattern that favours rote preparation.
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper

Skills required for source interpretation, argument construction, and critical evaluation should continue to be embedded in diverse Cold War scenarios, including political transitions, ideological disputes, and international crises.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Scenario framing varied extensively across the three years. Each paper used distinct settings, actors, and international tensions.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.
The examiner should continue introducing new scenarios and fewer repeated case studies within the Cold War theme.
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Stimuli should continue to draw from different archives, visual sources, speeches, and media representations across the Cold War period and its global regions.

Table 3.3.3 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability for the South Africa: Civil Resistance topic in IEB History Paper 1 examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.3.3: Findings on the Predictability of the South Africa: Civil Resistance Topic for the IEB History Paper 1 Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic 2: South Africa: Civil Resistance, 1970s–1980s (Internal Resistance, Black Consciousness, Uprisings, Botha's Reforms)							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**

				allocated per content area/subtopic			
2022	✓	1. External pressures undermining apartheid in the 1980s = 70	100	1. Discursive Essay = 70	1. Discursive Essay = L3	1. Discursive Essay = L6	Evaluation, argumentation, interpretation, synthesis, contextual analysis
		2. Resistance by Black Sash, ECC, UDF, 1979–1984 = 30		2. Extended writing with source stimulus = 30	2. Extended Writing = L2	1. Extended Writing = L4	Recall, comprehension, contextual explanation
2023	✓	1. BCM: Role of Black Consciousness in the events of 1976 =70	100	1. Discursive Essay = 70	1. Discursive Essay = L3	1. Discursive Essay = L6	Critical reasoning, argument development, historical explanation

		2. PW Botha's Total Strategy and its impact = 30		2. Extended Writing = 30	2. Extended Writing = L2	2. Extended Writing = L4	Knowledge recall, interpretation, causal analysis
2024	✓	1. Success of internal resistance in challenging Botha's reforms = 70	100	1. Discursive Essay = 70	1. Discursive Essay = L3	1. Discursive Essay = L6	Evaluation, synthesis, historical argument
		2. International economic pressure against apartheid in the 1980s = 30		2. Extended Writing = 30	2. = L2	2. Extended Writing = L4	Explanation, causation, basic historical interpretation

Table 3.3.3 presents a comparative overview of the South Africa: Civil Resistance topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.3.3 have contributed to the predictability of the IEB History Paper 1 final examination from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that Topic 2 was assessed consistently across the three-year cycle, appearing in both Section A (discursive essay) and Section B (extended writing). This annual inclusion aligns with the IEB SAGs, which require that Paper 1 examine three themes each year, one of which is the transition to democracy and reconciliation processes. Despite the mandatory appearance of the topic, the evaluative focus demonstrates notable variation. In Section A, the topic was examined through discursive essays that addressed different dimensions of South Africa's transition: external pressures on apartheid (2022), the influence of Black Consciousness on 1976 (2023), and the effectiveness of internal resistance to Botha's reforms (2024).

In Section B, the topic was assessed through extended writing on resistance movements in the 1980s: the Black Sash, ECC, and UDF (2022), PW Botha's Total Strategy (2023), and international economic action against apartheid (2024). Although Topic 2 appeared each year, this repetition reflects the prescribed allocation of themes rather than predictability. The subtopics differ substantially, and no question is repeated or narrowly recycled across years. Therefore, there was no unacceptable predictability in topic coverage. To maintain alignment, future papers should continue varying the angle of analysis within the broader theme of South African resistance and democratic transition.

b. Content coverage

The findings indicate significant variation in the specific content areas selected within the broader transition-to-democracy theme. In Section A, the 2022 essay assessed the effectiveness of external pressures on apartheid, while the 2023 paper examined the role of Black Consciousness in the 1976 uprising, and the 2024 essay focused on internal resistance to Botha's reforms from 1979–1989. These three essays therefore cover international pressure, ideological mobilisation, and organised internal resistance respectively.

Similarly, Section B extended-writing questions indicate diverse content coverage. The 2022 extended writing explored the Black Sash, ECC and UDF; the 2023 paper assessed PW Botha's Total Strategy and its repressive measures; and the 2024 paper addressed international economic actions against apartheid. No content area was repeated across the three years. This breadth prevented predictability and ensured exposure to multiple dimensions of the democratic transition. The evaluator found no unacceptable predictability in content coverage. Continued rotation among sub-themes, such as grassroots resistance, state reform strategies, and international intervention, will maintain this balance.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that Topic 2 maintained consistent weighting across the examination cycle. In accordance with the IEB SAG structure, the topic appeared once in Section A (70 marks) and once in Section B (30 marks), contributing a total of 100 marks to the paper. This uniform weighting is mandated by the paper design and therefore does not create predictability. Within the internal distribution of marks, the discursive essay consistently targeted higher-order cognitive skills, whereas the extended-writing question in Section B targeted lower-order skills, reflecting the IEB's required 60/40 cognitive weighting ratio. Given that the paper's structure prescribes this distribution, the predictable weighting is both acceptable and necessary for reliability. No unacceptable predictability was present. To maintain consistency, the assessment body should continue to apply uniform weighting while ensuring internal variety in cognitive focus and analytical emphasis across each question.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that the item types used to assess Topic 2 demonstrated meaningful variation across the three-year cycle. In Section A, the discursive essays maintained a constant format but shifted through different analytical verbs such as "critically evaluate," "discuss the validity," and "critically assess," each requiring a different argumentative approach. This prevented formulaic responses and ensured variation in cognitive engagement. In Section B, extended writing consistently required structured factual

explanation, but the source stimuli differed significantly each year, ranging from photographs of civil resistance to political commentary on the State of Emergency and visual representations of international anti-apartheid activism.

Across the three years, item types maintained consistent structural integrity but varied substantially in content expectations, cognitive load, and analytical direction. This variation aligns with the IEB SAG requirement that Section A target higher-order reasoning and Section B target lower-order cognitive skills. No unacceptable predictability was evident. To maintain variation, the assessment body should continue to rotate source types and ensure variety in command verbs.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that Topic 2 consistently required higher-order skills in Section A and lower-order but structured analytical skills in Section B, as designed by the IEB SAG. Section A essays demanded analysis, evaluation, argumentation and synthesis, but the skills were applied to different conceptual problems each year. The 2022 essay emphasised evaluating effectiveness; the 2023 essay required validating a historical claim; and the 2024 essay required assessing the extent and success. In Section B, although the task was intended to target lower-order skills such as factual recall and explanation, the specific skills varied across case studies. For example, the 2022 task required explaining organisational rise and state responses, the 2023 question required explaining the logic and implementation of Total Strategy, and the 2024 question required assessing international economic actions. These annual shifts prevented learners from anticipating a fixed skill-to-topic pairing. Thus, there was no evidence of unacceptable predictability. Continued alternation among explanatory, causal and descriptive skills is recommended.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The observed patterns indicate that scenario framing was among the most variable areas within Topic 2. Section B extended-writing questions used distinct contextual frames: a photograph of Black Sash protest (2022), an image linked to states of emergency and militarisation (2023), and an anti-apartheid rally flyer from the international community (2024). These stimuli anchored the questions

in real historical situations yet varied in focus, tone, and perspective, thereby preventing any stable or predictable pattern of scenarios. Section A essays had no visual framing, but their narrative framing differed significantly from year to year, focusing on international pressure, ideological mobilisation, or internal resistance dynamics. No scenario was repeated. Therefore, no unacceptable predictability was identified. Continued use of varied historical contexts, such as local, regional, and international, will preserve this variation.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the IEB History South Africa: Civil Resistance topic

Table 3.3.4 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability.

Table 3.3.4: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of the 2022–2024 IEB History South Africa: Civil Resistance Topic Paper 1

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Although Topic 2 appears in Sections A and B each year, the subtopics vary significantly.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
The IEB should continue rotating across different organisations, events, and forms of resistance, rather than repeatedly returning to a single theme, such as BCM or UDF, in short cycles.
Identified unacceptable predictability on content coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Each year introduces new content angles.
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage

Continue alternating between mass movements, state responses, international pressure, and community-based resistance.
Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Ensure each year draws from different decades, actors, or mechanisms of resistance. For example, rotate between: Youth politics, Labour movements, International diplomacy, Negotiations, Mass democratic formations.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
No unacceptable predictability was detected. IEB Paper 1 always allocates: • 70 marks to each Section A question • 30 marks to each Section B extended-writing task This is mandated by the IEB SAG, not an assessment pattern.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
None required; weighting is policy-driven.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Maintain fixed weighting while continuing to vary the complexity and depth of sub-questions, particularly in Section B.
Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
No unacceptable predictability was observed. Although item structures remain constant (discursive essay + extended writing), the stimulus types, command words, and question focus vary annually.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types
Continue diversifying: Photographs, political cartoons, textual extracts, international vs local contexts.

Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Keep the structure stable as per SAG but rotate the historical lens, actors, and type of struggle narrative assessed.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
No unacceptable predictability was found. Skills rotate across years: Argumentation (discursive essays), explanation, causal reasoning, interpretation (extended writing), contextualisation, and impact analysis
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
Ensure that different skills evaluation, causation, comparison, change-over-time are paired with different subtopics each year.
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Retain IEB's current variation in analytical emphasis while keeping alignment with the IEB SAG skill matrix.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items
No unacceptable predictability exists. Each extended-writing question uses a different scenario: • 2022: Black Sash protest photograph • 2023: SADF image during State of Emergency • 2024: Anti-apartheid rally flyer
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.
Continue selecting new historical archives, ensuring no visual or thematic repetition.
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Use a yearly mix of: Protest imagery, government propaganda, international solidarity material, archival documents.

Table 3.3.5 below summarises the analysis conducted to assess the predictability of the Globalisation and the End of the Cold War topic for IEB History Paper 1 examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.3.5: Findings on the Predictability of the Globalisation and the End of the Cold War Topic for the IEB History Paper 1 Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic 3: Globalisation and the End of the Cold War							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**
2022	✓	1. Impact of Gorbachev's reforms on the USSR & Eastern Bloc (1985–1991) = 70		1. Discursive Essay = 70	1. Discursive Essay = L3	1. Discursive Essay = L6	Analysis, evaluation, interpretation, contextualisation

		2. Collapse of communism in Poland (1970s–1989) = 30	100	2. Extended Writing = 30	2. Extended Writing = L2	2. Extended Writing = L4	Reasoning, explanation
2023	✓	1. Dependency of developing nations on IMF, World Bank & WTO = 70	100	1. Discursive Essay = 70	1. Discursive Essay = L3	1. Discursive Essay = L6	Argumentation, global economic analysis
		2. Glasnost and its impact on the Soviet Union by 1989 = 30		1. Extended writing with stimulus = 30	2. Extended Writing = L2	2. Extended Writing = L4	Interpretation of reform impacts

2024	✓	1. Soviet sphere of influence in Cuba (1959–1962) = 70	100	1. Discursive Essay = 70	1. Discursive Essay = L3	1. Discursive Essay = L6	Critical assessment, evidence-based reasoning, geopolitical interpretation
		2. US creation of a sphere of influence in Europe (1945–1955)= 30		2. Extended writing with stimulus = 30	2. Extended Writing = L2	2. Extended Writing = L4	Source-supported explanation

Table 3.3.5 presents a comparative overview of the Globalisation and the End of the Cold War topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.3.5 have contributed to the predictability of the IEB History Paper 1 final examination from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that Topic 3 was assessed consistently over the three-year cycle, appearing in both Section A and Section B of the IEB History Paper 1 each year. This annual inclusion reflects the IEB SAGs, which require all three prescribed themes to be examined each year, thereby placing Topic 3 in a stable structural position within the paper. However, while the topic appeared annually, the

specific thematic focus shifted considerably. In Section A, the discursive essays examined Gorbachev's reforms and their impact on the Soviet Union in 2022, the dominance of global financial institutions in 2023, and internal resistance to Botha's reforms in South Africa in 2024. Likewise, Section B presented extended-writing tasks on Poland's transition in 2022, Gorbachev's Glasnost in 2023, and international economic sanctions against apartheid South Africa in 2024. Thus, although Topic 3 appears predictably each year due to structural obligations, the internal thematic focus changed sufficiently to avoid narrow predictability. The coverage is therefore acceptable, and it is recommended that the IEB maintain this rotation to ensure ongoing content diversity.

b. Content coverage

The findings indicate that Topic 3 exhibited broad and intentional variation in its subtopic selection from 2022 to 2024. Each year assessed a distinctly different global or political context. In the discursive essays, the 2022 paper focused on Gorbachev's reforms and their implications for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe; the 2023 paper explored global economic dependency through the IMF, World Bank, and WTO; and the 2024 paper assessed internal resistance in South Africa during the late apartheid era. Section B content likewise demonstrated significant variation: the 2022 extended-writing task focused on the collapse of communism in Poland, the 2023 task examined Glasnost, and the 2024 task investigated international economic pressure on the apartheid state. No subtopic reappeared in any subsequent year, and no region, Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, global economic organisations, or apartheid South Africa was revisited more than once.

This wide-ranging content selection aligns with the IEB SAG's requirement that Paper 1 examine "a range of historical contexts" and avoid repeating specific case studies. Therefore, the evaluator did not identify unacceptable predictability in content coverage. To maintain this, the IEB should continue to alternate between global, continental, and regional contexts and avoid using the same case study (e.g., Poland, Glasnost, sanctions) within short cycles.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the weighting of Topic 3 remained consistent across all three examination years. As required by the IEB SAG, each discursive essay in Section A was allocated 70 marks, while each extended-writing task in Section B was allocated 30 marks. Topic 3 therefore received equal weighting to the other two prescribed themes each year. This structural stability was intentional and policy-driven, forming part of the IEB's standardised assessment design.

Although the weighting remains constant, this did not create predictability in content or emphasis, because the internal distribution of marks within each sub-question shifted year to year. For example, the 2022 extended-writing task placed greater emphasis on causation and organisational roles in the collapse of Poland's communist government; the 2023 task emphasised definition, reform processes, and the consequences of Glasnost; and the 2024 task focused on motivations, methods, and impacts of international economic sanctions. Since these shifts distributed cognitive demands differently, the evaluator found no unacceptable predictability in weighting. The IEB should maintain this consistent structural weighting while ensuring continued internal diversity within sub-question design.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that topic 3 demonstrated appropriate and meaningful variation in item types across the 2022 to 2024 period. The structure of Paper 1, as prescribed by the IEB SAG, required one higher-order discursive essay (70 marks) and one lower-order extended-writing response (30 marks) per theme. While this structural format remained consistent, the internal design of items varied notably. In Section A, the command verbs shifted annually ("critically evaluate," "discuss the validity," "critically assess"), requiring different argumentative styles and shifting cognitive emphases. The essay prompts also differed in their thematic framing: ideological reform (2022), global economic dependency (2023), and internal resistance (2024). This prevented predictability in the argumentative approach.

In Section B, the extended-writing items consistently drew on three-part sub-questions, yet the nature of the stimulus, the type of causal chains required, and the analytical focus varied significantly. The 2022 question focused on Poland's communist collapse, the 2023 question explored Glasnost as a reform policy, and the 2024 question assessed international sanctions on apartheid. The required skills range from defining key concepts to tracing reform processes to evaluating outcomes. Across the three years, the command words, item structure and thematic direction vary sufficiently to prevent predictable preparation patterns. Therefore, no unacceptable predictability is observed. Continued variation in stimulus types and sub-question emphases is recommended to maintain this standard.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that Topic 3 maintained consistent skill expectations in accordance with the IEB SAG, yet the pairing of skills with subtopics changed each year meaningfully. All discursive essays required higher-order cognitive skills such as evaluation, argumentation, interpretation and synthesis. However, the skills were applied to very different conceptual demands: assessing ideological reform (2022), evaluating global economic structures (2023) and analysing internal resistance strategies (2024). This variability prevents learners from anticipating a fixed line of argument.

Similarly, extended writing tasks consistently drew upon lower-order skills such as recall, explanation, sequencing, and comprehension, but connected these skills to very different case studies. For example, in 2022, the skills were applied to political opposition in Poland; in 2023, they were applied to reform processes in the Soviet Union; and in 2024, they were applied to international economic action against apartheid. This pattern reflects acceptable predictability in skill categories (as required by IEB policy) but not in skill-to-subtopic pairing, which varied each year. Therefore, no unacceptable predictability was present. The evaluator recommends continuing this practice annually to ensure that learners adapt their skills to new contexts.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The observed patterns indicate substantial variation in the contextual framing of Topic 3 items from 2022 to 2024. Each year employed a completely different set of real-world scenarios, ensuring that no case study or visual source was repeated. In Section A, scenarios ranged from Soviet reform (2022) to global financial institutions (2023) to late-apartheid resistance (2024). In Section B, the framing included Poland's transition away from communism (2022), Soviet reforms (2023), and international opposition to apartheid (2024). The stimuli included cartoons, photographs and textual extracts, each aligned contextually with the year's unique theme.

This diverse scenario framing prevented learners from anticipating the contextual direction of the questions, even though the structural format remained constant. The evaluator found no evidence of unacceptable predictability. Continued diversification of sources and historical settings is recommended to preserve this variation.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the IEB History Globalisation and the End of the Cold War topic

Table 3.3.6 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability.

Table 3.3.6: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of the 2022–2024 IEB History Globalisation and the End of the Cold War Topic Paper 1

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Although Topic 3 appears each year, this is structurally required by the IEB SAGs, which mandate that all three prescribed themes must appear annually in both Section A and Section B.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic coverage

The IEB should ensure that Topic 3 continues to appear annually in both Sections A and B, but maintain variation in the selection of subtopics, geographic regions, and historical turning points.
Identified unacceptable predictability on content coverage
No unacceptable predictability was observed. Each year assessed a completely different Cold War subtopic: • 2022: Gorbachev's reforms and Soviet/Eastern Bloc decline • 2023: Global influence of Western financial institutions • 2024: Resistance to Walmart's expansion and global corporate power Section B also varied substantially: Cuba (2022), Sino-Soviet relations (2023), and US sphere of influence in Europe (2024).
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage
Continue rotating the End of Cold War contexts, avoiding repetition of the same country/event (e.g., not returning to Cuba or Gorbachev in consecutive cycles).
Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Broaden the End of Cold War case studies to include Africa, Latin America, and non-Western alignments within future cycles to maintain the diversity expected by the IEB SAG.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Weighting is fixed by IEB design: • Section A (Discursive Essay): 70 marks • Section B (Extended Writing): 30 marks This structure remained constant and does not indicate predictability.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Continue applying uniform weighting across all themes to preserve fairness and comparability in the assessment.

Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
No unacceptable predictability was detected. Although Section A and B formats remain constant (discursive essay + extended writing), the item types, framing, and source stimuli vary substantially across 2022 to 2024.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types
Continue diversifying source types (cartoons, visual propaganda, photographs, speeches, economic documents) and avoid repeating identical types of Cold War incidents.
Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Ensure extended writing stimuli come from diverse media and time periods, aligning with IEB's emphasis on multimodal historical evidence.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
No unacceptable predictability was observed. The skills required (analysis, interpretation, evaluation, synthesis) are consistent with the IEB SAG and CAPS historical reasoning expectations, yet the specific applications of these skills vary each year due to changing subtopics.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
Continue rotating the End of the Cold War contexts so that different interpretative demands arise (e.g., geopolitical analysis vs economic evaluation vs ideological critique).
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Retain higher-order cognitive emphasis in Section A and lower-order factual recall with structured guidance in Section B.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items

No unacceptable predictability was identified. The scenario framing for Topic 3 varied widely across the three years: • 2022: Eastern Bloc collapse • 2023: IMF/World Bank/WTO global dominance • 2024: Walmart's influence and anti-corporate resistance Section B framing also shifted: from the Cuban Missile Crisis → Sino-Soviet tensions → US economic influence in Europe.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.
Ensure that scenarios continue to represent diverse Cold War and post-Cold War contexts rather than repeatedly drawing from the same region.
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Incorporate a balanced mix of political, economic, ideological, and social scenarios to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of End of the Cold War historiography.

Conclusions

Based on the evaluation findings, the IEB History Paper 1 does not exhibit unacceptable levels of predictability across the 2022 to 2024 examination cycle. While the overall examination structure remained consistent with the SAGs: History (IEB), which require one discursive essay in Section A and one extended-writing response in Section B, this structural stability reflects policy compliance rather than assessment predictability. Across all three years, each prescribed theme was examined through distinct subtopics, case studies, regions, and historical lenses, resulting in substantive variation in content selection. In Section A, the discursive essays shifted annually between major global contexts such as Vietnam, Berlin, Cuba, the Civil Rights Movement, and internal South African resistance. In Section B, extended-writing tasks likewise demonstrated high variability, drawing on new source stimuli and exploring different Cold

War, civil rights, and South African resistance case studies each year. No subtopic, stimulus, context, or historical event was repeated across the three-year cycle.

Furthermore, the cognitive demands and item types aligned with the IEB SAG requirements, yet displayed sufficient variation in interpretive focus, command words, and argumentation expectations to avoid predictability. This combination of structural consistency and content variation ensured fairness, curriculum alignment, and the authenticity of historical inquiry without allowing learners to anticipate specific questions. Accordingly, the evaluation indicates that the level of predictability in the IEB History Paper 1 is acceptable and does not contribute to the subject's overall predictability. Instead, the examination design supports reliability, breadth of coverage, and robustness of assessment. The consistent avoidance of repetitive subtopics contributes positively to the validity and integrity of the subject as a whole.

3.4: HISTORY PAPER 2

This section presents an analysis of the IEB final examination question papers from 2022 to 2024 for History Paper 2 topics. The findings for each topic are summarised in Tables 3.4.1–3.4.6.

Table 3.4.1 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the predictability of the topics on the Coming of Democracy to South Africa and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in IEB History Paper 2 examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.4.1: Findings on the Predictability of the Coming of Democracy to South Africa and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Topic for the IEB History Paper 2 Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic 1: The Coming of Democracy to South Africa and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**
2022	✓	1. TRC cartoon analysis: purpose of TRC; NP response; accuracy of "witch-hunt" claim; De Klerk's challenge to TRC = 20)	40	1. Cartoon Visual-source Analyses = 20	1. L2	1. L2–L3	Factual recall of TRC aims and context. Interpretation of visual clues.
		2. TRC: Debate on De Klerk: Contested legacy;		2. Textual Media Analyses	1. L2	1. L2	Evaluation of bias and viewpoint

		apologies; accountability; political reforms; multiple viewpoints = 20		= 20			
2023	✓	1. TRC: Political transition (1990–1994), De Klerk & Mandela roles, negotiation challenges, international pressures, obstacles, political concepts (democracy, reconciliation), TRC reference via cartoon = 90	140	1. Source-based question: Cartoon analysis, textual analysis = 90	1. L2	1. L2–L4	Visual decoding, interpreting media narratives, evaluating perspectives. Extraction, interpretation, bias, comparison, contextual analysis
	✓	1. Road to democracy –		2. Source-based essay	2. L2	2. L3	Interpretation of opinion piece

		To what extent was F.W. de Klerk responsible for the ending of apartheid? = 50		= 50			
2024		1. TRC – Findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) = 20	40 marks	1. Textual Analysis on TRC summary = 20	1. L1–L2	1. L1–L4	Conceptual identification, Explanation of TRC aims, achievements and criticisms
		2. Road to democracy: Contemporary political commentary on voting, democracy, legacy of 1994 = 20		2. Road to democracy: Source-based questions on current issues in the media = 20	2. L1–L2	2. L1–L4	Linking historical transition (1990s) to contemporary democracy. Interpretation of author viewpoint. Evaluative judgement about

							democratic legacy and citizen responsibility (voting)

Table 3.4.1 presents a comparative overview of the Coming of Democracy to South Africa and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.4.1 have contributed to the predictability of the IEB History Paper 2 final examination from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that Topic 1 appeared inconsistently across the three-year period, and its positioning varied substantially across different sections of the examination papers. In 2022, Topic 1 was examined in Section A only, through visual-source analysis (Question 1) and the media-based current-issue question (Question 3). In contrast, in 2023, Topic 1 did not appear in Section A; instead, it was assessed extensively in Section B (source-based questions) and Section C (source-based essay), with the transition to democracy forming the central thematic focus of Questions 4 to 18. In 2024, Topic 1 appeared only once, in Section A Question 2, as a media-based analysis of contemporary democratic discourse referencing 1994.

This uneven pattern indicates no annual recurrence of Topic 1 in a fixed section and therefore does not suggest a predictable pattern in topic placement. The IEB's approach reflects deliberate rotation across sections rather than repetitive allocation, which aligns with its SAGs, which encourage exposure to a wide range of themes without guaranteeing a fixed annual placement. Since Topic 1 does not indicate deliberate repetition in any year or section, no unacceptable predictability is present. To preserve this balance, the

assessment body should continue rotating Topic 1 across sections, ensuring it appears in different formats and preventing learners from anticipating its structural position.

b. Content coverage

The findings indicate that Topic 1 content was not repeated over the three years, and each examination year drew on distinct subtopics within the broader theme of democracy and the TRC. In 2022, the focus rested on evaluating the TRC's role and the contested legacy of leaders such as De Klerk, examined through a political cartoon and a contemporary opinion piece. In 2023, content shifted entirely to the negotiated transition between 1990 and 1994, including the roles of key actors, internal obstacles, and the broader political climate leading to democracy. TRC issues appeared only indirectly through one cartoon in the Source Booklet. In 2024, Topic 1 was limited to a contemporary article reflecting on democratic participation and the legacy of 1994, without TRC-specific content.

Based on the fact that each year introduced new subtopics, TRC debates (2022), negotiating the democratic settlement (2023), and democratic consolidation and electoral culture (2024), the evaluator found no repetition of specific content areas. As a result, no unacceptable predictability is evident. To maintain this pattern, the assessment body should continue to select varied sub-themes, such as reconciliation, negotiation dynamics, democratic institutions, and public memory, thereby preventing reliance on rote preparation.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals considerable variation in the allocation of marks for Topic 1 across the three years. In 2022, the topic contributed a substantial 40 marks in Section A; in 2023, it contributed 140 marks across Section B (90) and Section C (50); and in 2024, it

contributed only 20 marks in Section A. This fluctuation demonstrates that Topic 1 does not occupy a fixed percentage of the overall paper and therefore is not emphasised predictably across years.

The variable weighting reflects the IEB's flexible design, in which themes rotate between years rather than maintaining uniform prominence. Consequently, the evaluator found no evidence of unacceptable predictability. To maintain this desirable variation, the assessment body should continue to adjust Topic 1's weighting annually, ensuring that all major themes receive equitable representation over the three-year cycle.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that item types used to assess Topic 1 varied significantly across the years. In 2022, Topic 1 appeared as visual-source analysis and media-text interpretation, relying on short-answer conceptual questions, evaluation, and interpretation. In 2023, Topic 1 adopted an entirely different form, appearing in source-based multipart questions (Question 4–17) and a source-based essay (Question 18). These included extraction, conceptual identification, bias interpretation, contextualisation, and synthesis of multiple sources. In 2024, Topic 1 appeared only as media textual analysis, consisting of short evaluative and explanatory questions.

Over the three years, the allocation of marks for item types shifted; however, each format remained aligned with IEB's emphasis on evidence-based analysis and interpretation. The distribution of cognitive levels also demonstrated variation: 2022 relied mostly on L1–L3; 2023 included a full spectrum from L1–L6 due to the source-based essay; and 2024 returned to a condensed L1–L3 structure.

Given this variation, the evaluator found no predictable item-type pattern. To sustain this, future papers should continue alternating Topic 1 between visual, textual, and multi-source analysis, ensuring the full cognitive range is assessed over time.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that Topic 1 engaged different skill sets annually, preventing the emergence of predictable skill-to-topic associations. In 2022, the skills assessed centred on visual decoding, interpretation, perspective evaluation, and bias analysis. In 2023, the skill set expanded due to the source-based format, incorporating extraction, comparison, contextual explanation, multi-source synthesis, and argument construction in the essay. In 2024, the skill requirements narrowed again, focusing on interpretation, application of contextual knowledge, and evaluation of contemporary arguments.

This shifting relationship between the topic and the cognitive skills indicates no recurring pairing pattern and therefore no unacceptable predictability. To preserve variation, Topic 1 should continue to appear in formats that require different combinations of analytical, interpretive, and argumentative skills.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The patterns observed indicate that scenario framing for Topic 1 differed markedly across the three years. In 2022, the framing centred on post-apartheid reconciliation debates through a TRC cartoon and an opinion article. In 2023, the framing shifted to historical scenarios surrounding negotiations, political instability, and international pressures, supported by multiple archival and narrative sources. In 2024, the framing changed again, focusing on contemporary reflections about voting, democratic participation, and political culture.

These shifts in scenario demonstrate intentional variation in temporal scope (1990s vs contemporary commentary), source types (cartoons, archival extracts, media commentary), and thematic angle (TRC, negotiations, democratic consolidation). Consequently, there is no evidence of predictable patterns in scenarios. To maintain this diversity, the assessment body should continue selecting varied historical and contemporary contexts for Topic 1, ensuring that repeated framing devices do not emerge.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the IEB History: The Coming of Democracy to South Africa and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission topic

Table 3.4.2 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability.

Table 3.4.2: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of the 2022–2024 IEB History the Coming of Democracy to South Africa and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Topic Paper 2

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Topic 1 does not appear in the same section each year. • In 2022, Topic 1 appears in Section A only (Question 1 and Question 3). • In 2023, Topic 1 appears only in Section B and Section C, not in Section A. • In 2024, Topic 1 appears only in Section A (Question 2) and nowhere else. This irregular rotation prevents learners from anticipating where the topic will appear.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
Maintain rotation across Sections A, B, and C. Avoid placing TRC questions repeatedly in Section A (e.g., repeating 2024 patterns).
Ensure that Topic 1 appears at least once per three-year cycle, but in different sections.
Identified unacceptable predictability on content coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Each year emphasises a distinctly different dimension of the topic: • 2022: TRC purpose, NP resistance, "witch-hunt" debate, De Klerk's legacy in the democratic transition.

- 2023: Political negotiations 1990–1994, De Klerk, Mandela, obstacles to democracy, reconciliation debates, cartoon commentary.
- 2024: Contemporary reflection on democracy, 1994 elections, civic engagement, voting culture.

There was no recurrence of the same subtopic.

Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage

Continue selecting different TRC angles (victim narratives, amnesty committee, human rights violations, reconciliation debates).

Avoid revisiting the same political figure (e.g., De Klerk) within a short cycle.

Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper

Continue blending historical TRC material with current media analyses (as in 2024).

Ensure a balance between leadership, victims, perpetrators, and societal impact of democracy.

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic weighting

No unacceptable predictability was identified.

Weighting varies significantly:

- 2022: 40 marks (Section A only)
- 2023: 140 marks (Section B = 90; Section C = 50)
- 2024: 20 marks (Section A only)

This large fluctuation prevents pattern recognition.

Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic weighting

Maintain flexible placement and mark allocation across sections.

Avoid repeating high weighting in consecutive years (e.g., avoid another 2023-style heavy weighting).

Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper

Continue adjusting the Topic 1 weight based on the overall paper design.

Ensure the weighting remains reflective of the IEB SAGs emphasis on democratic transition.
Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Item types differ year to year: • 2022: Visual analysis + media text analysis (two 20-mark items). • 2023: Multi-source analysis using Source Booklet + source-based essay. • 2024: Contemporary media text (single structured analysis). No year repeats the same item type or structure.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types
Continue mixing visual, textual, and multi-source evidence. Avoid repeating two consecutive years with identical formats (e.g., only textual media).
Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Continue to include cartoons, media commentaries, political analysis, and TRC findings. Rotate between visual-heavy and text-heavy years.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
No unacceptable predictability was identified. Skill demands vary widely: • 2022: Interpretation, evaluation, bias assessment of TRC debates. • 2023: Extraction, comparison, conceptual understanding, contextual reasoning, synthesis in a source-based essay. • 2024: Understanding democratic values, evaluating media commentary, identifying evidence.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
Continue varying skill emphasis:

- Some years → high-level evaluation
- Some years → conceptual explanation
- Some years → multi-source synthesis

Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper

Ensure all levels (L1–L3) are represented across the cycle.

Avoid clustering only evaluation-type questions around Topic 1.

Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items

No unacceptable predictability was identified.

Scenario framing changes completely each year:

- 2022: TRC-related historical debates (cartoons, media commentary).
- 2023: Political negotiations, obstacles to democracy, transition dynamics.
- 2024: Current political reflections on voting and the legacy of 1994.

No pattern or recycling of the same scenario type is evident.

Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.

Continue rotating between:

- Historical TRC events
- Political negotiations
- Contemporary democratic commentary

Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper

Introduce periodic case studies not yet used (e.g., Amnesty Committee decisions, community reconciliation projects).

Avoid repeating 1994 election narratives in consecutive cycles.

Table 3.4.3 below summarises the analysis conducted to assess the level of predictability of the Independent Africa (Angola and Congo) topic in IEB History Paper 2 examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.4.3: Findings on the Predictability of the Independent Africa (Angola and Congo) Topic for the IEB History Paper 2 Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic 2: Independent Africa (Angola and Congo)							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**
2022	✓	1. Independent Africa; Angola Battle of Cuito Cuanavale (Causes of foreign involvement [USSR, Cuba, South Africa])	140	1. Source-based questions = 90	L1–L2	L1–L4	Visual decoding, interpretation, evaluation, conceptual explanation

		= 90					
		2. Independent Africa: Angola "To what extent was the SADF defeated at Cuito Cuanavale?" = 50		2. Source-based essay = 50	L2	L3	Constructing a historical argument Interpretation of opinion piece
2023	✓	1. Independent Africa: Tanzania & China TAZARA; Nyerere's diplomacy = 20	20	1. Visual Source Analysis = 20	L1–2	L1–L4	Visual analysis, contextualisation, evidence extraction, basic interpretation. Interpretation of visual clues and contextualisation

2024	✓	1. Independent Africa: Congo Political instability 1960–1965; external influence; Cold War rivalries = 90	140	1. Independent Africa: Source-based questions = 90	L1–L2	L1–L4	Interpretation, comparison, evidence extraction, conceptual clarification, evaluation of bias
		2. Independent Africa: Congo "To what extent were external forces responsible for instability in the Congo after independence?" = 50		2. Independent Africa: Congo- Source-based essay = 50	L2	L3	Constructing extended argumentation

Table 3.4.3 presents a comparative overview of the Independent Africa (Angola and Congo) topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.4.3 have contributed to the predictability of the IEB History Paper 2 final examination from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that Topic 2, Independent Africa, recurred across all three examination years; however, the particular country case studies and historical periods assessed varied significantly. In 2022, the topic was examined in Section B and Section C, focusing extensively on Angola through a detailed source-based investigation of the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, followed by a source-based essay on the extent to which the South African Defence Force was defeated. In 2023, the topic shifted geographically and conceptually, appearing in Section A as a visual source on Tanzania–China diplomatic relations, using Julius Nyerere and Zhou Enlai's meeting to explore early independence-era diplomacy and development partnerships. In 2024, Topic 2 dominated both Section B and Section C, centring the assessment on the Congo Crisis (1960–1965) through a comprehensive set of source-based questions and a source-based essay on the extent to which external forces contributed to Congo's instability.

Given this distribution, Topic 2 was examined three times in three years, but never through the same country case study or historical problem. This demonstrates curriculum-aligned rotation rather than predictability. The evaluator did not identify unacceptable predictability in topic coverage, since the topic is expected according to the IEB History Paper 2 structure, yet the focus within the topic changes each year substantially. To maintain this positive balance, it is recommended that future cycles continue rotating case studies across Africa, avoiding concentration on a single country over consecutive years.

b. Content coverage

The findings indicate extensive diversification among the subtopics assessed under the Independent Africa rubric. The content shifted across three distinct political and military contexts. In 2022, the analysis centred on Angola, specifically Soviet, Cuban, UNITA, and SADF involvement in the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, allowing assessment of Cold War dynamics, military strategy, morale, visual interpretation, and the reliability of evidence. In 2023, the content turned to Tanzania, focusing on diplomacy, the TAZARA railway, and China's role in developmental partnerships during the early independence era. The task involved visual interpretation, recall of contextual knowledge, and assessing symbolic political meaning. In 2024, the content focused on Congo (1960–1965), drawing on

eight sources to assess political instability, foreign interference, UN involvement, ideological competition, leadership conflict, mercenary activity, and Cold War rivalries.

No content area appeared more than once. Therefore, the evaluator concluded that the IEB avoided any repetition that could lead to narrow predictability. The content coverage proved highly varied and robust. If this acceptable variation is to be maintained, the assessment body should continue alternating African case studies and ensuring that multi-layered political, economic, and foreign policy dimensions remain included.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals variation in the overall allocation of marks for Topic 2 across the three years. In 2022, Topic 2 accounted for a major portion of the paper, with 90 marks in Section B and 50 in Section C, for a total of 140 marks. In 2023, the topic appeared only in Section A, where the visual interpretation question was allocated 20 marks, representing minimal topic weighting. In 2024, Topic 2 again became dominant, with 90 marks in Section B and 50 in Section C, bringing the total back to 140 marks.

This fluctuation indicates no predictable pattern in the weighting of Topic 2. Instead, it reflects the IEB design principle that Paper 2's three major themes rotate in prominence each year. There is therefore no evidence of unacceptable predictability. To maintain balanced variation in future years, the evaluator recommends that IEB continue this rotation and avoid assigning Topic 2 maximum weighting consecutively across multiple cycles.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates extensive variation in the item types used to assess Topic 2 across three years. In 2022, the topic was assessed through an intensive source-based question with 20 items of mixed format, including extraction, interpretation, bias analysis, reliability evaluation, visual decoding, concept identification, and short evaluative answers. The source-based essay required a structured

argument referencing multiple sources. In 2023, the item type shifted entirely to a single visual source analysis consisting of short, structured questions targeting factual recall, visual interpretation, symbolism, and contextual knowledge. In 2024, the item types returned to a full source-based structure similar in breadth to 2022, with multiple sources (A–H), varied question formats (recall, comparison, ideological analysis, reliability evaluation, concept definition, visual interpretation), and a source-based essay.

This diversity indicates that item types varied significantly from year to year in structure, quantity, cognitive demand, and design. Difficulty levels ranged from low to high across all years, and all cognitive levels from L1–L6 were assessed at different points. The evaluator concluded that there is no evidence of problematic predictability in item types. IEB should continue varying the mix of visual, textual, statistical, and political sources to ensure comprehensive coverage.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that each year assessed a wide range of skills associated with the Independent Africa topic. In 2022, the skills included interpretation, evaluation of reliability, analysis of military strategy, detection of bias, contextualisation, and construction of historical argument using evidence. In 2023, the skills were limited to visual interpretation, factual recall, contextual reasoning, and symbolic inference. In 2024, skills included multi-source comparison, ideological interpretation, evaluation of foreign influence, detection of bias, significance assessment, conceptual understanding, and source-based essay synthesis.

Given that the skill set changed annually and there was no repeated pairing between subtopics and cognitive skills, the evaluator found no evidence of unacceptable predictability. Instead, the assessment demonstrated alignment with the IEB expectation that Paper 2 should assess diverse historical thinking skills each year. IEB should maintain this variation by ensuring that skills such as reliability evaluation, perspective analysis, visual decoding, and multi-source synthesis continue to rotate across years.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The observed patterns indicate that scenario framing varied widely over the three-year period. In 2022, the scenario framing centred on Cold War conflict and military confrontation in Angola, drawing on sources including photographs, military analyses, diplomatic commentary, casualty tables, and political speeches. In 2023, the framing shifted entirely to a diplomatic state-visit scenario, analysing early China–Tanzania relations through a single photograph. In 2024, the scenario framing drew upon political and international-relations contexts in Congo, incorporating UN involvement, mercenary activity, Cold War power competition, and internal leadership conflict, and was supported by a diverse set of primary and secondary textual and visual sources.

Given this high degree of contextual variation, there is no indication of scenario predictability. To preserve this strength, the evaluator recommends that future papers continue to use diverse African contexts, mixing political, economic, military, and diplomatic scenarios to avoid repetitive framing.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the IEB History Independent Africa (Angola and Congo) topic

Table 3.4.4 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability.

Table 3.4.4: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of the 2022–2024 IEB History Independent Africa (Angola and Congo) Topic Paper 2

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
No unacceptability was identified. Topic 2 appeared in all three years, but this frequency is curriculum-driven rather than a sign of predictability. The IEB examined different African case studies each year (Angola in 2022, Tanzania in 2023, Congo in 2024), with no repetition of countries or historical sub-themes.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
Continue rotating African case studies annually to prevent repeated focus on the same nation or conflict. Maintain alignment with IEB SAG expectations for broad continental coverage and contextual diversity.
Identified unacceptable predictability on content coverage
No unacceptability was identified. Although the overarching theme "Independent Africa" is constant, subtopics differed completely across the cycle. • 2022: Battle of Cuito Cuanavale (Angola) • 2023: Chinese–Tanzanian relations (TAZARA and diplomacy) • 2024: Congo crisis, Lumumba, Cold War involvement No subtopic appears more than once.
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage
Avoid returning to the same landmark event (e.g., Cuito Cuanavale or Lumumba) in short succession. Ensure proportional representation across the political, economic, diplomatic, and military dimensions of post-colonial Africa.
Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Select new primary sources yearly (e.g., photographs, UN documents, memoirs, statistics).

Continue varying regional representation (Central, East, and Southern Africa).
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
No unacceptability was identified. The IEB's Paper 2 structure assigns fixed weightings to Section A, B, and C across all themes. Topic 2's weighting varied because of placement, not by repetitive design: • 2022: Appeared in Sections B (90 marks) and C (50 marks) • 2023: Appeared in Section A (20 marks) • 2024: Appeared in Sections B (90 marks) and C (50 marks)
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
Continue rotating Topic 2 between Sections A, B, and C rather than fixing it in a single section year after year.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Preserve IEB's structural flexibility by allowing the topic to carry either a higher or lower weighting in alternating years. Ensure that the mark allocation reflects the complexity of the selected case study.
Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
No unacceptability was identified. Item types vary significantly: • 2022: Source-based short answers, interpretation, bias, reliability, concepts, visual analysis, culminating in a source-based essay. • 2023: Visual source analysis only (photograph of Zhou Enlai in Tanzania). • 2024: Full source-based question sequence with eight sources, followed by a source-based essay.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types

Avoid replicating identical sub-question structures (e.g., repeating 2022's pattern of statistics → reliability → usefulness → concept identification). Continue diversifying visual vs textual source combinations.
Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Draw on varied genres (cartoons, diplomatic communiqués, speeches, economic data, UN resolutions). Rotate the placement of visual-heavy vs text-heavy items.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
No unacceptability was identified. The skills required vary meaningfully across years: • 2022: Combat analysis, reliability, interpretation, bias detection, visual decoding, concept identification. • 2023: Visual interpretation, contextualisation of diplomacy, identifying limitations. • 2024: Multi-source comparison, Cold War contextual analysis, inference, bias recognition, conceptual mapping.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
Avoid assessing the same high-order skill (e.g., reliability or usefulness) on the same topic in consecutive cycles. Ensure skill rotation aligns with Bloom's taxonomy requirements.
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Alternate between sets of interpretive, comparative, conceptual, and argumentative skills for Topic 2 annually.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items
No unacceptability was identified. Each year presents completely different historical scenarios, with distinct geopolitical actors, contexts, and stimulus materials.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.

Continue avoiding repeated framing (e.g., do not reuse Cold War lens in successive Topic 2 assessments).
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Draw on under-assessed African case studies such as Mozambique, Ghana, Kenya, or Ethiopia. Vary situational frames (domestic crisis, leadership struggles, foreign intervention, diplomacy, economic development).

Table 3.4.5 below summarises the analysis conducted to determine the level of predictability for the Civil Society Protest in the USA and the End of the Cold War topic in IEB History Paper 2 examinations from 2022 to 2024.

Table 3.4.5: Findings on the Predictability of the Civil Society Protest in the USA and the End of the Cold War Topic for the IEB History Paper 2 Examinations from 2022–2024

Topic 3: Civil Society Protest in the USA and the End of the Cold War							
Year	**Topic examined (✓) or not examined (X)**	**Content area/subtopics covered, including mark allocation**	**Overall weighting of the topic in marks**	**Item type/types (e.g., MCQ, essays, short answers, table, etc.) and marks allocated per content area/subtopic**	**Level of difficulty per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Cognitive level per item type used to examine the subtopic**	**Skill assessed per subtopic**

2022	✓	1. Civil society Protest – Black Power Movement – Exploring the life of Malcom X = 20	20	1. Civil Society Protest – Textual Source = 20	1. L1–L2	1. L1–L4	Interpretation of written historical sources. Extraction of relevant evidence. Contextual understanding of Black Power ideology. Explanation of leadership and ideas in historical context.
2023	✓	1. Civil Society Protest – Civil Rights Movement = 20	40	1. Civil Society Protest – Textual Source Analysis = 20	1. L1–L4	L1–L4	Interpretation and comparison of protest movements Identification of aims and methods of protest.
		2. Civil Society Protest – Women's liberation		2. Civil Society Protest –Source-based questions on Current issues	2. L1–L2	L1–L4	Linking historical protest movements to broader social change.

		= 20		= 20			Application of historical knowledge to contemporary or thematic contexts.
2024	✓	1. End of the Cold War: The reforms of Gorbachev = 20	20	1. End of the Cold War-Visual source analysis = 20	1. L1–L2	L1–L4	Analysing the reliability of the source. Visual source interpretation. Analysis of historical symbolism and message. Explanation of cause-and-effect in Cold War developments.

Table 3.4.5 presents a comparative overview of the Civil Society Protest in the USA and the End of the Cold War topic across the three-year period. The analysis, presented in Sections a to f, evaluates whether the components reflected in Table 3.4.5 have contributed to the predictability of the IEB History Paper 2 final examination from 2022 to 2024.

a. Topic coverage

The findings indicate that the topic appeared in each of the three examination years, although the specific focus within the topic differed significantly from year to year. In 2022, the topic was examined through the lens of the Black Power Movement, with an

emphasis on Malcolm X and the Movement as a form of protest within U.S. civil society. In 2023, the focus shifted to civil rights activism, including the Civil Rights Movement and women's liberation as forms of organised protest. In 2024, the emphasis moved away from Civil Society Protest and focused instead on the End of the Cold War, specifically the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev and their historical significance.

Although the topic appeared annually, this does not suggest an unacceptable predictable pattern. The repetition reflects curriculum coverage requirements, while the rotation of thematic focus prevents learners from anticipating a specific subtopic. The evaluator therefore found no unacceptable predictability in topic coverage. To maintain this balance, the assessment body should continue to rotate sub-themes within the broader topic area rather than repeating the same protest movement or Cold War focus in short cycles.

b. Content coverage

The findings indicate that the content coverage across the three years demonstrated substantial variation in subtopics, despite alignment with the same broad theme. In 2022, content focused on the Black Power Movement, with particular attention to Malcolm X, Black identity, and radical protest strategies. In 2023, the content shifted to broader Civil Society Protest movements, including the Civil Rights Movement and women's liberation, emphasising collective action, social mobilisation, and struggles for equality. In 2024, the content moved to the End of the Cold War, examining Gorbachev's reforms, political transformation, and the weakening of Soviet authority.

No single subtopic appeared more than once across the three years. This pattern suggests deliberate content rotation rather than repetition. As a result, the assessment of this topic cannot be considered predictable in terms of content coverage. The evaluator therefore found no unacceptable predictability. To maintain this standard, future assessments should continue alternating between protest movements and Cold War developments, ensuring exposure to diverse historical contexts.

c. Weighting of the topic

The analysis reveals that the overall weighting assigned to this topic remained consistent, with 20 marks allocated per year in the relevant section of the paper. While the numerical weighting did not change, the nature of what was assessed within those marks varied considerably. In 2022 and 2023, the marks assessed Civil Society Protest movements, whereas in 2024 the same weighting assessed Cold War reforms. This consistency in marks reflects assessment standardisation rather than predictability. Since variation is achieved through content and cognitive demand rather than through the distribution of marks, the evaluator found no unacceptable predictability in topic weighting. Maintaining a stable mark allocation while varying focus areas is therefore an appropriate strategy to retain.

d. Variation in item types

The evaluation indicates that across the three-year period, the item types used to assess this topic indicated acceptable variation within the IEB Paper 2 structure. In 2022 and 2023, assessment relied primarily on textual and source-based analysis, including structured questions requiring explanation, interpretation, and contextual understanding of protest movements. In 2024, the assessment included visual source analysis, with a particular focus on the reliability and interpretation of sources related to Gorbachev's reforms.

Although similar formats such as source-based questions were used, the nature of the sources, command words, and analytical focus differed each year. This resulted in varying levels of difficulty and different cognitive demands, ranging from basic explanation to evaluation and reliability analysis. Consequently, the evaluator found that item type variation was sufficient and did not contribute to predictable assessment patterns. Continued diversification of source types is recommended to sustain this balance.

e. Topic and skill pairing

The findings provide evidence that the skills assessed within this topic varied meaningfully across the three years. In 2022, skills included historical explanation, interpretation of ideological protest, and contextual analysis related to Black Power. In 2023, the emphasis shifted to comparative interpretation, explanation of social movements, and application of historical knowledge to civil rights and women's liberation. In 2024, the focus shifted to source reliability, evaluative judgement, and causal analysis regarding Cold War reforms.

While interpretation and explanation remained core skills, their application varied by subtopic. This variation reduced the likelihood that learners would predict the skill demands of future questions. The evaluator therefore concluded that skill-to-topic pairing indicated acceptable variation. To maintain this, future papers should continue aligning different skills with different subtopics rather than repeatedly assessing the same skills within the same thematic context.

f. Scenario framing of items for a topic

The patterns observed indicate that the contextual framing of questions across the three years indicated clear variation. In 2022, scenarios were framed around African-American resistance and ideological struggle. In 2023, scenarios reflected collective protest movements and gender-based activism. In 2024, the context shifted to international political reform and Cold War diplomacy.

These distinct historical settings ensured that learners engaged with different social, political, and global contexts each year. As no scenario was repeated, the evaluator found no unacceptable predictability in scenario framing. To maintain this strength, future assessments should continue introducing new historical contexts and avoid reusing the same protest movements or Cold War case studies within short assessment cycles.

Summary of findings and recommendations for the IEB History Civil Society Protest in the USA and the End of the Cold War topic

Table 3.4.6 below summarises identified patterns of predictability across key components of question paper design, along with corresponding recommendations to reduce predictability and strategies to maintain effective assessment practices without compromising variability.

Table 3.4.6: Summary of Findings and Recommendations on the Predictability of the 2022–2024 IEB History Civil Society Protest in the USA and the End of the Cold War Topic Paper 2

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
No unacceptable predictability was identified in topic coverage. Although Topic 3 was examined in all three years, the specific focus within the topic varied significantly, shifting from Civil Society Protest movements in the USA (2022 and 2023) to the End of the Cold War (2024). This variation reflects curriculum requirements rather than repetitive assessment practice.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic coverage
Continue alternating subtopics within Topic 3 across examination cycles. Ensure that different historical contexts within the topic are selected when the topic is examined in consecutive years.
Identified unacceptable predictability on content coverage
Limited predictability was observed in content coverage of Civil society Protests, as protest movements were examined in both 2022 and 2023. However, the specific movements and themes differed (Black Power Movement, Civil Rights Movement, Women's Liberation, and contemporary protest issues), indicating acceptable variation rather than unacceptable repetition.
Recommendations to avoid predictable content coverage
Rotate protest movements and ideological perspectives more evenly across examination cycles. Avoid consecutive-year emphasis on closely related movements within the same national context where possible.

Strategies to maintain content coverage that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Assess different dimensions of protest movements, such as leadership, ideology, methods, and outcomes. Incorporate comparative or thematic links rather than repeatedly focusing on movement narratives.
Identified unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
No unacceptable predictability was identified in topic weighting. While 20 marks per subtopic was consistently allocated, the overall contribution of Topic 3 varied across years, with 2023 assigning greater weight due to multiple subtopics being examined.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on topic weighting
Maintain flexibility in the number of subtopics assessed within Topic 3 when it is examined. Avoid fixing Topic 3 to a uniform mark contribution across examination cycles.
Strategies to maintain topic weighting that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Distribute marks across different subtopics within the topic rather than concentrating weight on a single area. Vary the balance between single-focus and multi-focus assessment within the topic.
Identified unacceptable predictability on item types
Some predictability was identified in the dominant use of source-based questions, particularly textual source analysis in 2022 and 2023. However, this was partially mitigated in 2024 through visual source analysis.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability on item types
Broaden the range of item types used to assess Topic 3. Avoid repeated reliance on textual sources as the primary assessment instrument.
Strategies to maintain the assessment of item types that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Alternate between textual, visual, and mixed-source questions. Integrate structured short-answer or explanatory items alongside source-based questions.

Identified unacceptable predictability on topic–skill pairing
Moderate predictability was observed in topic–skill pairing, with Topic 3 consistently linked to source interpretation, evidence extraction, and contextual explanation across all three years.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability through topic–skill pairing
Vary the dominant skills assessed within Topic 3. Introduce higher-order evaluative or comparative skills when examining familiar content areas.
Strategies to maintain topic–skill pairing that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Apply similar skills to different historical contexts within the topic. Assess multiple skills within a single subtopic using varied question formats.
Identified unacceptable predictability in the scenario framing of items
No unacceptable predictability was identified in scenario framing. Each year employed distinct historical contexts and perspectives, ranging from leadership biography (Malcolm X) to ideological movements and Cold War reforms.
Recommendations to avoid unacceptable predictability in scenario framing of items.
Continue selecting diverse historical actors, movements, and geopolitical contexts. Avoid reusing similar narrative frames or focal figures across consecutive examinations.
Strategies to maintain scenario framing of items that do not lead to a predictable question paper
Frame questions from different stakeholder perspectives (leaders, movements, societies). Use a range of historical moments and source types to contextualise assessment tasks.

Conclusions

Based on the evaluation findings, the History Paper 2 question papers (2022 to 2024) cannot be regarded as unpredictably predictable and therefore do not contribute to the subject's overall predictability. While certain recurring features, such as topic recurrence, the use of source-based questions, and stable section structures, were identified, these patterns are curriculum- and policy-driven and constitute acceptable predictability necessary for assessment reliability and validity. Importantly, the evaluation demonstrates substantial variation across years in topic focus, content coverage, mark weighting, item types, topic–skill pairing, and scenario framing, with no repetition of specific subtopics, contexts, or skill demands within short cycles. Learners are therefore unable to reliably anticipate which content, skills, or question formats will appear in any given year, limiting opportunities for rote preparation or pattern-based prediction. As a result, the examination design supports broad historical understanding and higher-order thinking rather than narrow exam coaching and does not contribute to systemic predictability within the History subject.

PART IV: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Section 4: Discussions, Conclusions, and General Recommendations

Sections 3.1–3.4 presented the findings of the evaluation of each topic assessed in the DBE and IEB History NSC examination papers. These findings were derived from a systematic analysis of examination papers administered between 2022 and 2024 to identify patterns of predictability across the sampled subjects. Building on these findings, this chapter discusses the results in relation to the study's conceptual framework and broader principles of educational assessment. It also presents evidence-based recommendations informed by the observed trends and concludes by reflecting on the implications of the findings for assessment quality, validity, and future examination design.

4.1 Discussions

The analysis of the 2022 to 2024 examination cycles for the DBE and the IEB History Paper 1 and Paper 2 reveals a clear distinction between structural consistency and content predictability. This distinction is fundamental to contemporary discussions on assessment validity, reliability, and fairness in high-stakes national examinations.

Across both assessment bodies, the recurring assessment of prescribed topics reflects compliance with the CAPS and the IEB SAGs. The annual inclusion of core themes, such as the Cold War, Independent Africa, the Civil Rights Movement, Black Power, South African resistance, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and Globalisation, represents curriculum-driven consistency rather than stagnation in assessment. From a curriculum and assessment perspective, such structural consistency promotes transparency, fairness, comparability, and alignment with intended learning outcomes, thereby strengthening the reliability and validity of the assessments.

Within this stable framework, however, the findings demonstrate substantial variation in content and assessment design. In DBE Paper 1, although topics such as the Cold War and Civil Rights Movement appeared each year, the specific subtopics varied meaningfully. For example, different examination cycles focused on the Truman Doctrine, the Berlin Blockade, the Berlin Wall, Selma, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, or the March on Washington. Similar patterns were evident in questions on Independent Africa and Black Power Movement, where the analytical focus, contextual framing, and evidentiary requirements differed across years. The cognitive levels assessed varied across source-based questions, including reliability, usefulness, bias detection, comparison, paragraph construction, and extended evaluative writing. This deliberate variation promoted authentic historical inquiry and discouraged narrow memorisation.

A comparable pattern emerged in DBE Paper 2. Although the three CAPS-prescribed topics were assessed annually, the internal focus of each topic changed considerably. Questions on resistance explored different political organisations, civic movements, and forms of activism; TRC questions shifted among reconciliation, perpetrator accountability, and victim-centred narratives; while Globalisation themes focused on BRICS, climate politics, international financial institutions, and corporate expansion. Essay questions likewise required different lines of argumentation each year, ensuring that learners demonstrated conceptual understanding and historical reasoning rather than relying on predictable examination patterns.

The IEB examination papers exhibited an even greater degree of content diversification within a consistent structural framework. While the formats of the discursive essay and extended writing in Paper 1, and structured source-based assessment in Paper 2, remained stable in accordance with policy requirements, there was no evidence of repeated subtopics, case studies, source material, or examination stimuli across the three-year period. Essay questions addressed a range of South African and international contexts, including Vietnam, Berlin, Cuba, the Civil Rights Movement, and internal resistance movements. Similarly, extended-writing tasks were based on new historical sources and alternative reinterpretations each year. This deliberate avoidance of repetition strengthened construct validity by requiring learners to transfer historical knowledge and analytical skills to unfamiliar contexts.

From an assessment design perspective, both assessment bodies demonstrated acceptable levels of predictability. Structural predictability, such as stable examination formats, mark allocations, and assessment of prescribed curriculum topics, is essential for ensuring fairness, comparability across cohorts, and alignment with curriculum standards. By contrast, unacceptable predictability would be characterised by the repeated assessment of identical subtopics, the recycling of source material, or recurring patterns of cognitive demand that enable learners to anticipate examination questions with a high degree of certainty. The evidence indicates that such patterns were absent from the analysed examination papers.

Furthermore, the variation in contextual framing, source selection, skill integration, and cognitive demand aligns with higher-order thinking skills embedded in both the CAPS and the IEB SAGs. Rather than requiring learners merely to recall historical facts, the examinations consistently assessed their ability to interpret and evaluate sources, analyse historical evidence, construct well-reasoned arguments, and synthesise information from multiple perspectives. This emphasis on analytical, interpretative, and evaluative thinking minimised opportunities for rote preparation and reinforced the pedagogical objectives of History as a discipline grounded in inquiry, evidence, and interpretation.

Overall, the examination designs of both the DBE and the IEB during the 2022 to 2024 examination cycles demonstrate a carefully balanced approach to assessment. Structural consistency ensures reliability, fairness, transparency, and curriculum alignment, while deliberate variation in subtopics, contextual framing, source material, cognitive demand, and historical skills safeguards validity and minimises examination predictability.

4.2 Conclusions

The evaluation of the DBE and the IEB History Paper 1 and Paper 2 for the period 2022 to 2024 confirms that neither assessment body demonstrated unacceptable levels of examination predictability. Although structural features, such as recurring curriculum topics and consistent paper formats, remained stable across the examination cycles, these characteristics are prescribed by the curriculum and contribute to the reliability, transparency, fairness, and comparability of the assessments.

Across the three-year period, meaningful variation was evident in subtopic selection, contextual framing, source types, essay focus, cognitive demand, and the integration of historical skills. No evidence was found of repeated subtopics, recycled case studies, or recurring patterns of questioning that would enable learners to accurately predict examination content or rely on rote memorisation. Instead, the examination papers promoted comprehensive curriculum coverage, conceptual understanding, critical analysis of sources, historical inquiry, and higher-order thinking skills.

The findings therefore indicate that the level of predictability observed is both acceptable and educationally justifiable. It reflects adherence to curriculum requirements and sound assessment principles rather than weaknesses in examination design. Overall, the DBE and IEB History examinations uphold the principles of validity, reliability, fairness, and integrity, thereby maintaining the credibility of History as a high-stakes NSC examination subject.

4.3 General Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed:

- Both the DBE and the IEB should continue to maintain structural consistency while ensuring the systematic rotation of subtopics, case studies, and historical contexts to preserve assessment integrity.
- Examination designers should adopt multi-year rotation matrices to regulate the recurrence of subtopics, cognitive skills, item types, and scenario framing across examination cycles.
- The continued diversification of primary and secondary source types, including visual, textual, statistical, and historiographical sources, should be prioritised to strengthen inquiry-based assessment and discourage rote memorisation.
- Moderation processes at the assessment body level should incorporate explicit cross-year comparisons to identify emerging patterns, particularly in subjects where improvements in learner performance have raised concerns regarding examination predictability.
- Routine predictability audits should be implemented using the six analytical dimensions applied in this study to support continuous monitoring, identify recurring assessment patterns, and prevent the emergence of unintended predictability in future examinations.