IB Business & Management

Internal Assessment

HL Guide Book

And

Summer Assignment

2012-2013
Summer 2012

Summer Reading Assignment-You must read and complete the following assignments:

1. Select one of the following books
   - The Intelligent Investor by Benjamin Graham
   - The Ivy Portfolio by Mebane Faber
   - The Big Short by Michael Lewis
   - The One Minute Manager by Blanchard and Johnson

   **The assignment:** You must write a paper of at least 500 words that displays knowledge and understanding of your book and a detailed response that links to topics/units discussed in our course. **This will be due Friday, August 26th, 2011**

2. A topic for your HL Internal Assessment and two of your sources for your HL IA (articles or scholarly journals) on your IA subject. These are very similar in nature to the ones used in the SL course. You may not find a book that entirely relates to your topic/question. It is suggested you use approximately six to eight sources in the writing of the paper. Your sources must be current (within two years). Please note that primary sources must also be used in the HL IA.

3. Research Proposal and Action Plans-Details explaining the research proposal are listed below. **The assignment:** HL IA topics, submission of two sources, and your research proposal will be due on September 15, 2012.

Examples of HL IA’s may be found on the course website: [https://sites.google.com/site/ricsbusiness/documents-assignments](https://sites.google.com/site/ricsbusiness/documents-assignments)
Introduction

The aim of the IB Business & Management IA is to demonstrate the application of your business skills and knowledge.

HL Research Project

Background

You must select a real organization for this, not a fictional one, and the issue or decision under investigation must also be real.

You are expected to gather primary research from the organization.

You have to carry out research that addresses an issue facing an organization or analyses a decision to be made by an organization.

You must also produce a research proposal that can be used as a primary planning document and be presented in terms of an action plan.

Your title is very important. Your title has to give focus and direction and must be framed as a question.

You must produce a written report that does not exceed 2,000 words.

It is important that you find a topic that you find both interesting and motivating.

Bear in mind that some organizations fail to provide data, which may undermine the quality of your report. So before you start, make sure that you will be able to obtain the necessary data from the chosen organization.

You must also be aware of ethical considerations. There is a need for tact, sensitivity to other people and respect for confidentiality.

Your Research project has two parts that you MUST hand in:

Research Proposal and action plan (500 words)

Written Report
Step by step guide to the Research Proposal

Your IA MUST begin with the research proposal and action plan. These will become the primary planning documents – and will give your research project overall direction. The following is the format for your research proposal. You MUST follow this format. Each step is clearly explained for you in the box below…

**Research Question**

This is your title. It must be posed as a question. We can modify this title and perfect it before the final deadline. You should consult with your teacher on the title.

**IMPORTANT:** Your research question must be forward looking rather than descriptive and should require you to make recommendations for future action.

**Theoretical Framework**

This should include:

a) **Rationale for study:** The rationale for this study means the reasons on which it is based. I.e. why have you chosen to do this proposed study, what are your reasons?
b) **Areas of the syllabus to be covered:** In this section you must outline what aspects of this topic you will look at. This can be done in bullet form and can be re-written at any time. You should also justify why you are covering this area of the syllabus, e.g.:

   “I will look at/consider ……. to see how ……..”

**Methodology**

This should include:

a) **Possible Sources of Information:**
   What methods will you use to get your information? What are the advantages and possible disadvantages to these methods?
   What will you base your questionnaire/survey on?
   b) **Organizations/individuals to approach:**
   Who will you ask the questionnaire/survey to?
   Do you have useful contacts? What was their role?
   Do you think it will be difficult getting information from a certain group, e.g. employees?
   Who do you think will be the most useful person approached?
   What information do you hope to get from these people?
   c) **Methods to be used to collect and analyze data, and the reason for choosing them.**
   How many people will you ask your survey/interview/questionnaire?
   How will you collect the data? Will you be there to ask the questions?
   Do you predict you’ll get a good response rate?

**Anticipated Difficulties**

This should include:

What other problems do you think you will face? (e.g. language barrier etc.) How do you propose attempting to solve these problems?
Do you see yourself facing any confidentiality/sensitivity issues and how will you solve these?

**Action plan**

This is evidence of planning – see the page overleaf for an example layout of your action plan which you should follow!
**HL Written Report**

The written report, which follows the research proposal, is the second part of the internally assessed research project.

The following is the required format for the written report. This MUST be followed exactly as it is outlined below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Title Page</strong></th>
<th>I have attached a sample title page – please follow the exact outline.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acknowledgements</strong></td>
<td>Here is where you acknowledge and thank the people who helped you with your research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contents Page</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Executive Summary (Abstract)</strong></td>
<td>This is a concise, clear, explicit summary (maximum 200 words) of your whole work. I should be able to read it and know everything you did – from the beginning till the end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It includes any recommendations or conclusions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The research question and executive summary should guide the reader to the substance of the report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You have to try to include everything in your summary, from the introduction, to the methodology, to your findings and conclusions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is recommended that the executive summary include three elements:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. the research question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. the scope of the research (including the methodology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>. the main findings, conclusions and recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Briefly outline the issue. This is NOT a history of the company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>End with:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This has therefore led me to the following research question:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Put your title at the end of your introduction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research question</strong></td>
<td>See Introduction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This is your title and is to be written at the end of your introduction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Procedure/method** | This is your full methodology. It must include ALL research used – and this research should be evaluated. I.e. how useful was that research? How reliable? Valid? Were there any problems faced? How were they solved?  
- Tell us about what you did, in a step by step format.  
- If you had the chance to do this again, what would you change and why? |
| **Main results and findings** | This must include ALL findings and results. It should, for example, include ALL questionnaire results in the form of graphs and charts.  
There should be NO analysis here. It is purely your results summarised. |
| **Analysis and discussion** | This is where you have the opportunity to earn the most marks. This is the most important part of your report. This is NOT the time to have lots of graphs and charts. This is a DISCUSSION of your findings.  
Answer the question here.  
Have a discussion (but a formal one!)  
Look at effects, causes, solutions (The IMAPCT).  
Consider the needs of the company.  
Consider alternatives.  
Consider possible reasons.  
  - Use your findings to back up your arguments and it is OK to make judgements, ask questions – critically evaluate!! Identify the main issues and explain their significance.  
  - What do your findings tell you about your company? Is this a good indicator for the company? |
Remember to use **business tools** to help you along in your discussion. But be careful, do NOT allow your whole analysis to be a load of business tools. It should be mostly TEXT in the form of a discussion (with subtitles), with the odd business tool to help you prove your points, assess and make judgments.

Remember:

- To evaluate (weigh up the arguments)
- Rationale (look for possible reasons)
- Critically examine/assess (for and against)
- Reflective discussion: always reflect on your suggestions and ideas and findings. “This could be due to…”?

Remember…

- You must prove to the examiner that you are able to use your research and gather new ideas and therefore form discussions from them.
- You must develop a detailed breakdown of the themes outlined earlier. It should be clearly organised.
- The discussion should be well referenced.
- There should be evidence of interpretation of findings.

To get the highest mark in your analysis, your discussion has to be probing, in-depth and informative. Your ideas have to be integrated well and the issues you are discussing have to have a logical and coherent order. There has to be consistent evidence of critical, reflective thinking.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

If you wish, you can put these two together.

Sum up your discussion

Answer the question initially set

Here, you must consider limitations of the research. And future action to
address limitations of the research MUST be proposed for full marks.

At the end of your conclusion: what does the future hold for your company?

The project must CONCLUDE based on the evidence collected, analysed and presented.

The conclusion must answer the question set initially and relate to your objectives.

The recommendations must be based on the evidence shown.

We do not look for right answers but we do expect any judgments made to be supported by reference to evidence and logical argument.

The conclusion should link together with everything you have discovered. DO NOT worry if you feel you are repeating yourself; when you conclude you do summarise the points already made.

Your recommendations should look into the future and suggests what should be done. Draw heavily on primary and secondary research collected, as recommendations cannot be made upon a hunch.

Remember….

To get the highest mark in your conclusion, your conclusion and recommendations have to be consistent with the evidence presented and directly address the research question. You should propose future action to address limitations here.

**Bibliography and references**

These must be detailed, well referenced throughout and well organized.

**Appendices**

Each part of this has to be clearly numbered and used at one point in...
Your analysis.

Word Count…

Research Proposal – 500 words

Written report – 2,000 words

Including…

The 2,000 words does not include supplementary information such as title page, executive summary, diagrams, figures, table of data, references and appendices. But – tables will be included in the word count if they are wordy--- be careful with this. It seems, however, that you can put SWOT and PEST in your appendices and refer to it.

Suggested word count…

Introduction: 200 words
Procedure or Method: 200 words
Main results & Findings: 200 words
Analysis and Discussion: 1000 words
Conclusion and recommendations: 400 words.

The above is a suggestion only – and you may wish to change it, as long as your report does not exceed 2,000 words.

FINISHING OFF YOUR IB PROJECT
ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Findings: these include graphs/charts/tablets. But you must also incorporate the written analysis of your findings in here.

♦ In your analysis, you are to answer the question set as your main project title.
♦ What do your findings tell you about your company?
♦ Is this a good indicator for the company?
♦ You must think about possible reasons/rationale behind your findings: “This could be due to…”
♦ You must prove to the examiner that you are able to use your research and gather new ideas and therefore form discussions from them.
♦ In the summary of your conclusion: what does the future hold for this company?

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

♦ If you wish, you can put these together.
♦ The project must CONCLUDE based upon evidence collected, analysed and presented.
♦ The conclusion must answer the question set initially and relate to your objectives.
♦ The recommendations must be based on the evidence shown.
♦ We do not look for right answers but we do expect any judgements made to be supported by reference to evidence and logical argument.
♦ The conclusion should link together with everything you have discovered. DO NOT worry if you feel you are repeating yourself: when you conclude you do summarise the points already made.
♦ Your recommendations look into the future and suggests what should be done. Draw HEAVILY on your research both primary and secondary. Recommendations cannot be made upon a hunch.
♦ Put in a SWOT analysis here.

FINAL THOUGHTS

♦ Quality of Language: Spelling, punctuation, terminology and grammar.
♦ Presentation: You can have photographs, tables, graphs, diagrams.
♦ Report structure: word processed, page numbers, references, bibliography, title pages.
♦ Have the same header/footer for each page with logo, or company’s name etc, to show the presentation is well thought out.
• Think about quality of language:
  spelling/punctuation/grammar and of course your business
terminology!
• Think about presentation: you can use
  photographs/tables/graphs/charts or diagrams
• Report structure: you should know by now how to set one out.
• Everything word-processed.
• Number the pages
• Always use references, they like this! Your references have to
  precise. E.g. book (page numbers), websites (exact URLs) etc.
• Have a bibliography
• Have a title page.

The following is from the IBO website:

**Written report—details**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title page</th>
<th>This should give a clear indication of what is contained in the research project.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example of a title page:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To: Managing director

Title: Should Peterson Electronics relocate their factory?

Author: Student name and number

Date: 1 March 2007

Subject and level: Business and management higher level

Circulation: Chairman and board of directors

Number of words: 1,992

I confirm that this work is my own work and is the final version. I have acknowledged each use of the words or ideas of another person, whether written or oral.

Signed:

This is a good example of a title because it:

- is a question
- is specific
- is manageable
- encourages the application of business terms
- looks forward and requires recommendations.

Acknowledgments

This section should acknowledge any individual who has made the production of the report possible.

Contents page

This should include the major headings in the report, beginning with the executive summary. Page numbers should be clearly indicated.

Executive summary (abstract)

The executive summary provides a review of the document as a whole, outlining conclusions drawn and recommendations made. Together with the title, the executive summary should provide a clear overview of the document. It is imperative, therefore, that it is explicit yet brief (between 100 and 200 words). It is recommended that the executive summary include three elements:

- the research question
- the scope of the research (including the methodology)
- the main findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Introduction

The function of the introduction is to demonstrate background knowledge about the organization, to give a clear outline of the topics under investigation and to outline the rationale for the research.
Research question
This is a clear, unambiguous question that indicates the scope of the investigation and requires an answer. A well-devised question is more likely to result in a report that achieves high marks. The research question should be reviewed at the end of the process and amended if necessary.

Procedure or method
This should be a summary of the primary and secondary research undertaken and the business techniques applied. It should also include an assessment of the validity and reliability of the data collected (for example, partiality and scope) and the methods employed. The student should explain any changes made as the work progressed.

Main results and findings
The purpose of the analysis of the results section is to clarify what the raw data has revealed. This should include a summary of the data collected and findings, and should, where appropriate, be supported by tables, graphs and statistics.

Analysis and discussion
This involves interpreting the results and findings clearly and succinctly. Students should identify the main issues emerging from the research and explain their significance. The discussion should be sequenced and coherent. It should also be carefully referenced.

Conclusion and recommendations
The conclusions must follow from the analysis and discussion. This is not the place to introduce new facts or arguments. Conclusions are normally presented as a list of fairly brief statements. Recommendations should be precise and there should be practical proposals for action that stem from the conclusions. If the results of the research are inconclusive, the student should recommend further research to be undertaken.

Bibliography and references
The project should contain a correctly presented bibliography, acknowledging all material referred to in the research. Quotations from textbooks and other sources of information should be acknowledged in the main body of the text or through the use of footnotes. Students should include the specific pages used from texts in the footnotes. Students should be discouraged from including inappropriate materials such as lengthy company management reports.

Appendices
These should include only relevant information that supports or emphasizes what is discussed in the report. They will include examples of photographs, documents, questionnaires, numerical raw data in tables and statistical calculations.

Selecting a topic for the research project or written commentary
It is important that students, with the teacher’s guidance, choose an issue that:

- engages their interest
- is realistic in terms of resources
- meets the criteria for assessment.
Using the library
The school library should be used actively to enable students to acquire the skills of
individual research through a variety of media such as books, periodicals and
electronic databases. The ability to locate and use appropriate sources effectively is
essential for worthwhile research in business and management.

The professional librarian is a trained information specialist, whose knowledge of, and
insight into, information will complement that of the subject specialist teacher. The
librarian can help students and teachers with information gathering and research skills
at all stages of the research project or written commentary.

The teacher may wish to build on the work of the librarian with study skills sessions
to ensure that students make the best use of their time. Noting down resources in a
standard format, prescribed by the teacher, can be a useful starting point. In addition,
teachers can give general guidance on information gathering, note taking and the
construction of a well-organized file of preparatory material.

Word limits
Students and teachers must ensure that the word limit is not exceeded. If a student
does exceed the word limit, he or she will lose 3 marks (from a maximum of 25
marks). Moderators are instructed not to read beyond the word limit. This means,
apart from the loss of 3 marks, students could potentially lose more marks.

Referencing
References must be included to show where statements, ideas and evidence come
from. It is very important to cite all sources used. If students do not reference their
work, issues about the authenticity of the work may be raised.

Sources should be referred to in the text, and a standard referencing format should be
used for the bibliography and footnotes. Students should ensure that their method of
referencing is consistent throughout, and that all the relevant information is provided.
The referencing system must enable the reader to locate the original sources easily.

How to reference sources
The following guidance is based on the Harvard author–date system. It is offered only
as an example: the IBO permits any accepted convention for citing and
acknowledging sources.

Body text
Use brackets or parentheses to set off a reference in the text. Give the author's last
name, if it is not part of the text, the page number(s) and the date of publication.

- (Johnson, p98, 2006)
A full reference should appear in the bibliography at the end of the piece of work.

**Footnotes**

Footnotes provide related information that does not belong in the text. There should be as few of these as possible and they should be identified with a superscript number and placed at the bottom of the same page.

**Bibliography**

The bibliography, or list of references used, should appear at the end of the piece of work.

List sources alphabetically by the last names of authors or editors. If there is no author or editor, list sources by titles and put them in order by date.

**Books:** Author’s last name and first name, or initial if name is unknown. Date. Title (in italics). Place of publication. Publisher’s name.


**Articles in journals:** Author. Date. Title of the article (in quotation marks). Name of the journal (in italics). Volume number, first and last pages.


**Information from the Internet:** Author’s name if possible. Title (in italics). Date site was visited. URL (address for the home page). Heading as listed on the web page (if there is one).

HL research project

**A Research proposal and action plan**
Criterion A should be used to assess the research proposal and action plan only.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>There is no research proposal or action plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There is a research proposal and action plan. However, elements of the research proposal or action plan are inappropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The research proposal and action plan are generally appropriate, but they are not clear and focused.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The research proposal and action plan are appropriate, clear and focused. There is some identification of the theoretical framework and methodology to be employed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The research proposal and action plan are appropriate, clear and focused. There is clear identification and explanation of the theoretical framework and methodology to be employed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B Use of theoretical concepts, sources and data (written report)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>There is no use of theoretical concepts, sources or data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There is a very limited understanding of relevant theoretical concepts, and these concepts have been misused. The sources and data are irrelevant or insufficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>There is a limited understanding of relevant theoretical concepts, but these have not been applied effectively. The sources and data are generally relevant, but insufficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>There is an understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and evidence of some of them being applied effectively. The sources and data are relevant and sufficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>There is an understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and evidence of them being applied effectively. The sources and data are relevant and sufficient. There is some evidence of the sources and data being used effectively and related to the theoretical framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>There is an in-depth understanding of relevant theoretical concepts and consistent evidence of them being applied effectively. The sources and data are relevant and sufficient. There is consistent evidence of the sources and data being used</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
effectively and integrated with the theoretical framework.

### C Analysis and evaluation (written report)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>There is no discussion, analysis or evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Findings are very limited and the discussion is superficial. The report lacks order and coherence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Findings are limited and the discussion tends to be superficial. There is an attempt to sequence ideas and references.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>There is some analysis of the findings but the discussion may be unnecessarily descriptive. There is some integration of ideas and issues in a logical order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The analysis of the findings is appropriate. There is some integration of ideas and issues in a coherent order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The analysis of the findings is appropriate and there is an attempt at evaluation. There is sound integration of ideas and issues in a coherent order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The analysis and evaluation of the findings are appropriate. There is sound integration of ideas and issues in a coherent order, and some evidence of critical thinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The analysis and evaluation of the findings are appropriate. There is sound integration of ideas and issues in a coherent order, and consistent evidence of critical, reflective thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### D Conclusions and recommendations (written report)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>There are no conclusions or recommendations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There are conclusions or recommendations, but they are inconsistent with the evidence presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>There are conclusions or recommendations. Some are consistent with the research question, but may not be supported by evidence presented in the main body of the report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>There are conclusions and recommendations. These are consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report and with the research question, but are not fully developed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are conclusions and recommendations. These are consistent with the evidence presented in the main body of the report and with the research question, and are well developed. Future action to address limitations of the research is proposed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement level</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The report is of no practical value to management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The report exceeds 2,000 words, or is of limited practical value to management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The report has some practical value to management. There are significant omissions in the presentation of the report. Bibliography and referencing are inappropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The report is of practical value to management. There are minor omissions in the presentation of the report. Bibliography and referencing are appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The report is of practical value to management. The report is well presented, forward-looking and follows the required written report format. Bibliography and referencing are appropriate.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>