Military Leaders

IB SL Study Guide

Contents

How to Use This Guide

- **Prescribed Subject 1** covers two case studies from different regions: Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire, and Richard I of England and the Third Crusade
- **Paper 1** tests source analysis skills — OPVL, comparison, and evaluation — alongside factual knowledge of the leaders' campaigns, tactics, and legacies
- **Exam Alerts** flag the traps that cost marks in source questions and extended responses
- **IB Tips** highlight what examiners reward when analysing military leadership as a historical theme
- **Practice Questions** mirror real Paper 1 structure, with model answers

Aligned to IB History SL Prescribed Subject 1 — current syllabus

Videos on this page: Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire · Richard I and the Third Crusade

Section 1: Case Study 1 — Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire (c.1162–1227)

1.1 Rise to Power: Background and Path to Leadership

Genghis Khan was born **Temujin** (c.1162) on the Mongolian steppe. Understanding the political environment he grew up in is essential to explaining both his methods and his achievements.

The steppe environment:

- The Mongolian steppe was home to dozens of nomadic tribes — Mongols, Tatars, Keraits, Naimans, Merkits — in constant conflict
- There was no unified Mongol state; leadership was clan-based and unstable
- Alliances shifted constantly; betrayal and abduction (including of women and children) were regular features of inter-tribal warfare
- Resources were scarce; raiding was a basic economic strategy

Temujin's early life:

- His father Yesugei, a minor chieftain, was poisoned by rival Tatars when Temujin was approximately nine years old
- The clan abandoned the family, leaving Temujin, his mother Hoelun, and siblings to survive alone on the steppe — a formative experience of vulnerability and self-reliance
- As a young man, Temujin was captured by the Merkits (who had abducted his wife Borte); he called on his blood-brother **Jamukha** and his patron **Toghrul**

Khan (leader of the Keraits) to help rescue her — demonstrating early skill at building alliances
- By the 1190s, Temujin had built a following of warriors, absorbed rival clans, and was gaining regional dominance

Path to supreme leadership:

- **1206:** At a great assembly (**kurultai**) on the Onon River, Temujin was proclaimed **Genghis Khan** — meaning "Universal Ruler" or "Oceanic Ruler" — by the Mongol tribal leaders
- This was not simply a military victory — it was a political consolidation of the entire steppe under a single authority for the first time

MEMORISE THIS

Key people in Genghis Khan's rise:

Person	Role
Hoelun	Mother; raised Temujin after his father's death
Jamukha	Blood-brother (anda) turned rival; provided early alliance, later defeated and executed
Toghrul Khan	Kerait leader and patron; helped Temujin recover Borte
Borte	Wife; her abduction by Merkits was the catalyst for Temujin's first major military campaign

1.2 Military Organisation: The Structure of the Mongol Army

The military machine Genghis Khan built was one of the most effective in pre-industrial history. Understanding its structure is essential for explaining his conquests.

The decimal system:

The Mongol army was organised on a strict **decimal system** — an innovation that imposed clear command hierarchy and made large forces manageable:

Unit	Size	Name
Smallest unit	10 men	Arban
Company	100 men	Zuun
Regiment	1,000 men	Minghan
Division	10,000 men	Tumen

Key features of Mongol warriors:

- Every Mongol male was a soldier from childhood — riding, archery, and endurance were daily skills
- Warriors were expected to provide their own horses (each warrior maintained 3–5 horses, allowing rapid rotation and sustained speed)

- Discipline was extreme — desertion, cowardice in battle, or failing to support a comrade were capital offences
- The **meritocracy principle**: commanders were chosen for ability, not birth — a revolutionary departure from tribal custom

Military technology and equipment:

- The **composite recurve bow** — the primary weapon; could fire accurately at 200+ metres from horseback, with a rate of 6–12 arrows per minute; superior to the longbows of contemporary European armies
- Light cavalry: mobile archers who advanced, feigned retreat to draw out enemies, then encircled and destroyed them
- Heavy cavalry: armoured lancers for the final decisive charge
- **Siege technology**: Genghis Khan systematically recruited Chinese and Persian engineers after conquests, incorporating catapults, battering rams, fire weapons, and tunnelling into Mongol capabilities — a critical upgrade that allowed the conquest of walled cities

⚠ EXAM ALERT

Exam Alert: A common error is claiming the Mongols were purely light cavalry raiders who could not take fortified cities. This was true in the early period but became false after the conquest of the Jin dynasty's northern territories (1211–1215), when Mongol forces acquired Chinese siege expertise. By the time of the Islamic world campaigns, Genghis Khan had formidable siege capability — the fall of Zhongdu (1215) and later Samarkand (1220) demonstrate this.

1.3 Military Campaigns: Strategy, Tactics, and Key Battles

The Unification of the Steppe (1190s–1206)

Before external conquests, Genghis Khan had to defeat and absorb his Mongol rivals:

- Defeated the **Tatars** (who had killed his father) — 1202
- Broke with and defeated his former patron **Toghrul** of the Keraits — 1203
- Defeated the **Naimans** and **Merkits** — 1204–1205
- Each victory incorporated the defeated tribe's warriors into the Mongol army under Mongol commanders, rather than enslaving or massacring them — adding to his strength with each conquest

The Xi Xia and Jin Campaigns (1205–1215)

Genghis Khan's first major external conquests targeted the settled states on China's northern border:

- **Xi Xia (Tangut kingdom):** Three campaigns (1205, 1207, 1209) forced submission and tribute without full conquest — demonstrating the use of

punitive raids to extract compliance
- **Jin Dynasty (northern China):** Invaded 1211; by 1215 the Jin capital **Zhongdu** (near modern Beijing) had fallen. The Jin were not fully defeated until after Genghis Khan's death (1234), but the campaign permanently disrupted the most powerful state in East Asia

The Mongols' tactical playbook:

The following tactics appear repeatedly across all campaigns and are essential knowledge for source analysis questions:

1. **Feigned retreat (tulughma):** Cavalry advanced, engaged briefly, then fled — drawing enemy cavalry into pursuit, out of formation, and into prepared encirclements. European and Islamic armies repeatedly fell for this tactic.
2. **Terror as policy:** Cities that surrendered immediately were typically spared; cities that resisted were massacred. This was a calculated strategy — news of Mongol atrocities spread ahead of the army, encouraging surrender without siege.
3. **Intelligence and reconnaissance:** Mongol scouts ranged far ahead; the Mongols gathered detailed intelligence through merchants, refugees, and spies before invading a new territory.
4. **Operational coordination:** Mongol armies routinely executed coordinated offensives across hundreds of kilometres, with separate columns converging on enemies who could not respond to multiple threats simultaneously.
5. **Psychological warfare:** Deliberate use of extreme violence against resisting populations — combined with promises of safety for those who submitted — created a binary choice that often paralysed defenders.

The Khwarazmian Campaign (1219–1221)

The destruction of the **Khwarazmian Empire** (roughly modern Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia) was Genghis Khan's most complete conquest and the most devastating in terms of casualties.

Background: Shah Muhammad II of Khwarezm executed Mongol trade envoys — an act Genghis Khan treated as a declaration of war requiring total annihilation, not just punitive retaliation.

Scale and outcome:

City	Fate
Otrar	Besieged and destroyed; governor executed
Samarkand	Surrendered; population largely spared but city looted
Urgench	Resisted; almost entirely destroyed
Merv	Surrendered and then massacred — estimates of 700,000+ dead (likely exaggerated by Persian sources but catastrophic in reality)
Nishapur	Resisted; destroyed; according to sources every living thing killed, including cats and dogs

The Khwarazmian campaign is one of the most studied examples of the application of terror as systematic military strategy. It ended Central Asian urban civilisation in many areas for generations.

> **IB TIP**
>
> **IB Tip:** When answering questions about the impact of Genghis Khan's campaigns, distinguish between the short-term destruction and the long-term consequences. The Mongol conquests destroyed cities and disrupted trade routes in the short term, but the subsequent Pax Mongolica (peace within the Mongol Empire, 1250s–1350s) reopened the Silk Road and enabled the first sustained overland contact between Europe and China — Marco Polo's journey (1271–1295) was a direct consequence. Examiners reward this kind of nuanced long-term analysis.

Death of Genghis Khan (1227)

Genghis Khan died in August 1227 during the final Xi Xia campaign — the cause is debated (battle injury, illness, or a fall from his horse). He had not fully conquered China, Persia, or Russia. His successors — particularly his son **Ögedei** — would continue expansion.

1.4 Administration and Legacy

Administrative Innovations

Military conquest alone does not explain the Mongol Empire's longevity or scale. Genghis Khan built administrative systems that held diverse conquered peoples together:

- **Yasa (Yasaq):** A code of laws governing Mongol behaviour — covering military conduct, trade, religious tolerance, and treatment of envoys. The Yasa's enforcement created a degree of legal consistency across the empire.
- **Religious tolerance:** Genghis Khan exempted religious leaders of all faiths (Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Taoist) from taxation and military service. This was partly pragmatic — it reduced resistance from religious communities in conquered territories.
- **The Yam (postal relay system):** A network of relay stations across the empire allowing rapid communication and the movement of official personnel. Riders could cover 200–300 km per day using fresh horses at each station — a logistical achievement that sustained imperial administration across thousands of kilometres.
- **Meritocracy:** Non-Mongols who demonstrated loyalty and ability were given high administrative positions. Some of the empire's most important administrators were Chinese, Persian, or Uyghur.
- **Trade facilitation:** Genghis Khan actively protected and promoted trade along the Silk Road. Merchants were given safe conduct letters; robbery of merchants

was a capital offence.

Legacy

The legacy of Genghis Khan is deeply contested in historiography, and IB source questions frequently exploit this:

Destructive legacy:

- Estimates of total death toll from Mongol conquests range from 20 to 40 million — though these figures are disputed and likely inflated by medieval sources
- The destruction of the **Abbasid Caliphate's capital Baghdad** (1258, by Genghis Khan's grandson Hulagu) ended the Islamic Golden Age and destroyed the House of Wisdom (Bayt al-Hikma), a catastrophic cultural loss
- Depopulation of Central Asia and Iran — some regions took centuries to recover

Constructive legacy:

- The **Pax Mongolica**: Within the empire after conquest, trade, communication, and movement of peoples and ideas flourished for roughly a century
- Spread of bubonic plague (inadvertently) — Mongol trade routes likely facilitated the spread of the Black Death to Europe (1346–1353)
- Cultural exchange: paper money, gunpowder, printing, and other Chinese technologies spread westward under Mongol rule
- Modern national identities: Genghis Khan is a founding hero figure in Mongolia, Inner Mongolia, and Kazakhstan

MEMORISE THIS

GCKI mnemonic — Genghis Khan's key legacy areas:

- **G**overnment innovation (Yasa, Yam, meritocracy, religious tolerance)
- **C**onquest scale (largest contiguous land empire in history)
- **K**illing and destruction (estimated millions of deaths, cultural destruction)
- **I**nternational trade (Silk Road reopened, Pax Mongolica)

1.5 Timeline: Genghis Khan

MEMORISE THIS

Critical dates to know:

Date	Event
c.1162	Temujin born on the Mongolian steppe
c.1171	Father Yesugei poisoned by Tatars; clan abandons family
c.1182	Temujin captured by Merkits; rescued with help of Toghrul and Jamukha
1202	Defeat of the Tatars
1203	Defeat of the Keraits (Toghrul)
1204–1205	Defeat of Naimans and Merkits; unification of steppe complete
1206	Kurultai on Onon River; proclaimed Genghis Khan
1205–1209	Xi Xia campaigns; submission secured
1211	Invasion of Jin Dynasty (northern China)
1215	Fall of Zhongdu (Jin capital)
1219	Invasion of Khwarazmian Empire begins
1220	Samarkand falls
1221	Khwarazmian Empire destroyed; Shah Muhammad II dies in exile
1227	Death of Genghis Khan during Xi Xia campaign

▸**Watch: Genghis Khan and the Mongol Empire** VIDEO

Section 2: Case Study 2 — Richard I of England and the Third Crusade (1157–1199)

2.1 Rise to Power: Background and Path to Leadership

Richard was born on September 8, 1157, the third son of **King Henry II of England** and **Eleanor of Aquitaine**. His path to the English throne was shaped by political turbulence within his own family.

Family and early life:

- Richard grew up primarily in **Aquitaine** (southwest France), his mother's duchy — he spoke Occitan as his first language and regarded Aquitaine as his homeland more than England
- He was given the Duchy of Aquitaine at age 11 (1168) and began governing it in his own right in 1172
- The **Revolt of 1173–1174**: Richard joined his brothers Henry the Young King and Geoffrey, backed by Eleanor, in a rebellion against Henry II — his first major military experience. The revolt failed; Richard made his peace with his father
- Through the 1170s and 1180s, Richard proved himself a formidable military commander suppressing baronial rebellions in Aquitaine

Becoming king:

- His elder brother Henry the Young King died in 1183, making Richard heir
- In 1189, Richard allied with **Philip II of France** against Henry II — forcing his father to surrender and grant Richard the succession. Henry II died in July 1189, a broken man

- Richard was crowned **King of England on September 3, 1189**

Military experience before the Crusade:

By 1189, Richard had over fifteen years of active military command in Aquitaine and against his father. He was not a ceremonial king taking command of an army for the first time — he was an experienced, tested commander who had conducted sieges, cavalry battles, and guerrilla campaigns.

⚠ EXAM ALERT

Exam Alert: Students often describe Richard as "a warrior-king who neglected England." This is accurate as a description of his reign (he spent about six months of his ten-year reign in England) but misleading as a criticism of his leadership. Richard's primary political identity was as Duke of Aquitaine and a French prince — he viewed England as a revenue source for his campaigns. Do not project modern expectations of a resident monarch onto a medieval king.

2.2 The Third Crusade: Context and Campaign

Why a Third Crusade?

The **Third Crusade (1189–1192)** was launched in response to the conquest of Jerusalem by **Saladin** (Sultan of Egypt and Syria) on **October 2, 1187** — the single greatest shock to the Christian world since the First Crusade had taken Jerusalem in 1099.

Saladin's victory at the **Battle of Hattin** (July 4, 1187) destroyed the field army of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and paved the way for the fall of Jerusalem. The **True Cross** — the most sacred relic in Crusader possession — was captured.

The leaders of the Third Crusade:

Leader	Title	Role in Crusade
Richard I	King of England, Duke of Aquitaine and Normandy	Became effective military commander; led the campaign's decisive operations
Philip II	King of France	Co-leader; left after the fall of Acre (July 1191); political rivalry with Richard
Frederick I Barbarossa	Holy Roman Emperor	Drowned crossing the Saleph River (June 1190) before reaching the Holy Land; his army largely disbanded
Saladin	Sultan of Egypt and Syria	Defender; opponent and, in some ways, counterpart of Richard

MEMORISE THIS

Third Crusade fast facts:

- Richard's share of funding: sold offices, castles, and lands in England; famously said he would sell London if he could find a buyer
- Duration of Richard's campaign in the Holy Land: June 1191 to September 1192 (14 months)
- Territory recovered: Acre, the coastal strip to Jaffa — but not Jerusalem
- Treaty outcome: Treaty of Jaffa (September 1192) — three-year truce, Christian pilgrims allowed access to Jerusalem

The Siege of Acre (August 1189 – July 1191)

Before Richard arrived, the remnants of the Crusader forces were already besieging **Acre** — the most important port city in the Holy Land. When Richard arrived in June 1191 (Philip had arrived in April), he reorganised and re-energised the siege.

- Richard arrived with a well-equipped fleet, siege equipment, and substantial funds
- His contribution was immediate: engineering improvements to siege works, better supply organisation, and personal leadership that raised morale among forces that had been stalled for nearly two years
- Acre surrendered on **July 12, 1191**

The massacre at Ayyadieh: After Acre's fall, Saladin failed to complete a prisoner exchange on the agreed terms. Richard ordered the execution of approximately **2,700 Muslim prisoners** at Ayyadieh (August 20, 1191). This remains one of the most controversial acts of Richard's campaign — condemned by Muslim sources, defended by some Christian chroniclers as a military necessity before a march south.

⚠ EXAM ALERT

Exam Alert: The massacre at Ayyadieh is frequently used as a source in Paper 1. Christian and Muslim sources interpret it very differently. A Muslim chronicler (such as Baha ad-Din ibn Shaddad, Saladin's biographer) describes it as an atrocity; a Crusader chronicler may justify it as a response to Saladin's breach of terms. In an OPVL question, the origin of each source — its author's faith, proximity to events, and purpose — is critical to explaining both its value and its limitations.

2.3 Military Campaigns: Richard's Leadership in the Field

The March to Jaffa (August–September 1191)

After Acre, Richard led the Crusading army south along the coast toward Jaffa — the launching point for any attack on Jerusalem. This march is widely regarded as the finest demonstration of Richard's generalship.

The military challenge: Saladin's army harassed the column constantly — attacking the flank and attempting to draw the Crusaders into a premature charge that would

break the formation.

Richard's tactical solution:

- Strict march discipline: the column was divided into a fighting column (shields and crossbowmen on the flank) and a supply column close to the coast, protected by the fleet
- Orders not to charge: Richard repeatedly refused to allow cavalry to break formation despite provocation — a difficult order to enforce with knights who considered charging their primary role
- Crossbowmen maintained fire discipline, absorbing attack while the column moved

The Battle of Arsuf (September 7, 1191):

Saladin launched a major assault on the Crusader column near Arsuf. Despite his orders, two Hospitaller knights broke and charged — triggering the entire Crusader cavalry to follow. Rather than condemning the breach of discipline, Richard immediately exploited it: he committed the rest of the cavalry and turned the unplanned charge into a coordinated assault that routed Saladin's force.

Arsuf demonstrated two key leadership qualities:

1. **Adaptability:** Richard turned a discipline failure into a tactical victory in real time
2. **Operational persistence:** Despite the breach of orders, Richard maintained the campaign's momentum and reached Jaffa

> **IB TIP**
>
> **IB Tip:** The Battle of Arsuf is excellent material for questions about leadership qualities. Richard's decision to exploit the unplanned charge rather than punish it shows tactical intelligence and calm under pressure. However, examiners also reward students who note the limits of Richard's generalship — he never actually captured Jerusalem, and his strategic objective ultimately failed. A strong answer distinguishes between tactical excellence and strategic success.

Attempts on Jerusalem (Late 1191 – Early 1192)

Despite taking Jaffa and reaching **Beit Nuba** (within 12 miles of Jerusalem) twice, Richard never attacked the city. He made the decision to withdraw on both occasions.

Why Richard did not attack Jerusalem:

This is one of the most discussed strategic decisions of the Crusades and is frequently examined in Paper 1:

1. **Water and supply:** The inland route to Jerusalem crossed difficult, waterless terrain. Saladin had poisoned wells and stripped the countryside. The Crusader army could not be reliably supplied for a siege of a strongly garrisoned city.

2. **What would happen after capture:** Richard's council debated this seriously — if Jerusalem was taken, most Crusaders would complete their pilgrimage and go home. Richard would be left with an indefensible city in the middle of Saladin's territory with a skeleton garrison. The strategic calculus was that capturing Jerusalem without the ability to hold it was worse than not capturing it.
3. **European politics:** Philip II of France had left the Crusade and returned to France, where he was threatening Richard's French territories. Richard was under increasing pressure to return home.

> **MEMORISE THIS**
>
> **Richard's decision not to attack Jerusalem — the three-part argument:**
>
> 1. Supply/water: the inland route was logistically impossible
> 2. Post-capture problem: who stays to garrison it? Most Crusaders leave after completing their vow
> 3. European politics: Philip II threatening Normandy and Anjou
>
> Always bring in at least two of these for full marks on extended-answer questions about this decision.

The Treaty of Jaffa (September 1192)

Richard and Saladin negotiated a **three-year truce**:

- Crusaders retained the coastal strip from Tyre to Jaffa
- Ascalon's fortifications (which Richard had rebuilt) were demolished
- Christian pilgrims were granted safe access to Jerusalem
- Jerusalem remained under Muslim control

Richard departed the Holy Land on October 9, 1192. He never returned.

2.4 Richard and Saladin: Military Leadership Compared

One of the distinctive features of this Prescribed Subject is the opportunity to compare two commanders. IB Paper 1 sources often present both leaders, and Question 3 (comparison) may ask you to compare their approaches directly.

Saladin as a military leader:

- **Consolidation:** Before the Third Crusade, Saladin had unified Egypt and Syria under his rule — the political achievement that made his military campaigns possible. Without this, Hattin could not have happened.
- **Battle of Hattin (1187):** Saladin's greatest victory. He manoeuvred the Crusader army into a waterless position on the Horns of Hattin plateau, denied them water for days, then destroyed them — a textbook example of controlling terrain and logistics to defeat a stronger but less mobile force.

- **Chivalry:** Both Christian and Muslim sources record Saladin's treatment of enemies as relatively merciful by medieval standards. After Jerusalem fell in 1187, Saladin allowed Christians to purchase their freedom (those who could afford it) rather than massacring the population. This contrasted sharply with the Christian massacre of Jerusalem's Muslims and Jews in 1099.
- **Limitations:** Saladin could not destroy Richard's army in the field. At Arsuf and in the coastal marches, his harassment tactics failed to break Crusader discipline. He was frequently unable to prevent Richard from resupplying by sea.

MEMORISE THIS

Comparison table — Richard I vs. Saladin:

Dimension	Richard I	Saladin
Core strength	Tactical battlefield command; siege management; troop morale	Strategic planning; political unification; logistics (denial of resources)
Key victory	Acre (siege, 1191); Arsuf (battle, 1191)	Hattin (battle, 1187); Jerusalem (siege, 1187)
Key limitation	Never captured Jerusalem; strategic objective unmet	Could not destroy Crusader field army; ultimately lost the coast
Reputation for chivalry	Mixed — praised for personal courage, criticised for Ayyadieh massacre	High — treatment of Jerusalem, ransom of prisoners (mostly)
Political context	Distracted by French territorial threats; left Crusade before completion	Held together a coalition of Muslim forces with competing loyalties

2.5 Leadership Qualities: Decision-Making and Relationship with Troops

Personal Courage

Richard's personal courage was noted by both allies and enemies and was a deliberate tool of leadership. Medieval sources recount him fighting in the front ranks at multiple engagements. This was not recklessness — it served a specific function: in an army of feudal knights and mercenaries held together by personal loyalty, a king who led from the front was worth far more in motivational terms than a king who commanded from a distance.

The risk: Richard was wounded multiple times. His death (from a crossbow bolt at the siege of Chalus-Chabrol in 1199, where he was not even wearing full armour) illustrates the danger of this leadership style. He died at 41, having survived the Crusade only to be killed in a minor dispute over a French treasure hoard.

Relationship with Troops

- Richard maintained strict discipline on campaign — the march to Jaffa's success depended on soldiers following orders not to break formation under provocation
- He also understood motivation: the generous distribution of plunder, personal visibility on the battlefield, and rhetoric that framed the Crusade as a holy mission were all part of maintaining army cohesion over a 14-month campaign in extreme heat with high casualties
- Unlike many feudal commanders, Richard remained in the Holy Land for the full campaign rather than returning home early (as Philip II did)

Diplomacy

Richard's diplomatic engagement with Saladin is one of the more complex aspects of this case study and appears frequently in sources:

- The two leaders exchanged gifts, fruit (including snow-cooled fruit during Richard's illness), and messages during the campaign
- Richard proposed a diplomatic solution involving his sister Joan marrying Saladin's brother Al-Adil — which came to nothing but reveals Richard's willingness to pursue non-military solutions when advantageous
- Richard's willingness to negotiate the Treaty of Jaffa was pragmatic, not a sign of weakness — he achieved a treaty that secured the Crusader coastal position and Christian pilgrim access

⚠ EXAM ALERT

Exam Alert: Some sources (particularly later medieval Christian sources) portray the Richard-Saladin relationship as chivalric and warm. Be careful with this narrative — it was heavily romanticised in the centuries after the Crusade. Primary sources from the campaign show a complex mixture of mutual respect, active attempts to destroy each other's armies, and political calculation. Do not read the diplomatic exchanges as evidence of personal friendship.

2.6 Impact and Legacy

Short-Term Impact

- The Third Crusade **failed to recover Jerusalem** — the stated objective of the Crusade — but preserved the Crusader coastal kingdom for another century
- Richard's campaigns demonstrated that Saladin's empire, while powerful, could not drive the Crusaders into the sea when competently led
- The Treaty of Jaffa allowed Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem to continue, which mattered enormously to medieval Christian culture

Long-Term Legacy

Richard in English historiography:

- Richard became the archetypal "warrior-king" in English popular culture — the noble knight-king of medieval romance
- The reality is more complex: Richard raised massive taxes for the Crusade, sold offices and lands indiscriminately, and spent minimal time governing England. His deputy **William Longchamp** was deeply unpopular; his brother **John** (later King John) intrigued against him
- Modern historians tend to assess Richard as an outstanding military commander and a poor administrator — though the distinction may reflect anachronistic expectations

Richard in European and Islamic historiography:

- For Islamic historians, Richard is a formidable adversary who delayed but did not reverse the Muslim reconquest of the coast
- The Crusading movement Richard led is seen in modern Arab historiography as a form of colonial aggression against Muslim lands — a framing that affects how primary sources from both sides are interpreted

Why the Third Crusade matters for Paper 1:

- The case study provides a context-rich environment for source analysis: there are primary sources from Christian and Muslim perspectives, from Crusader participants and opponents, from biographers of both leaders — each with distinct origins, purposes, and limitations

IB TIP

IB Tip: In a source question comparing a Crusader chronicler's account with a Muslim account of the same event (for instance, the Ayyadieh massacre or the fall of Acre), examiners expect you to comment on the author's faith, proximity to events, purpose (chronicle for a Christian audience vs. biography of Saladin), and how these factors create both value and limitation. Do not simply say "both sources are biased" — analyse how the specific origin and purpose of each creates specific, nameable blind spots and strengths.

2.7 Timeline: Richard I and the Third Crusade

MEMORISE THIS

Critical dates to know:

Date	Event
8 Sep 1157	Richard born at Oxford
1168	Given Duchy of Aquitaine
1173–1174	Revolt against Henry II (with brothers and Eleanor)
3 Sep 1189	Crowned King of England
4 Jul 1187	Battle of Hattin; Jerusalem's army destroyed by Saladin
2 Oct 1187	Saladin captures Jerusalem
Jul 1189	Richard takes the Cross; begins preparations for Crusade
Apr–Jun 1191	Philip II then Richard arrive at Acre
12 Jul 1191	Acre surrenders
20 Aug 1191	Massacre of Ayyadieh
7 Sep 1191	Battle of Arsuf
Oct–Dec 1191	First march toward Jerusalem; withdrawn from Beit Nuba
Jan–Jul 1192	Second advance toward Jerusalem; again withdrawn
2 Sep 1192	Treaty of Jaffa signed
9 Oct 1192	Richard departs the Holy Land
6 Apr 1199	Richard dies at Chalus-Chabrol from crossbow wound

▸**Watch: Richard I and the Third Crusade** VIDEO

Section 3: Comparing the Two Leaders

3.1 Themes Across Both Case Studies

The IB syllabus requires you to study both leaders as examples of a common set of themes. The following comparison is essential for extended-response questions.

Rise to power:

Dimension	Genghis Khan	Richard I
Starting position	Abandoned child of a minor chieftain; no inherited power	Born a prince; power inherited, though contested within family
Path to leadership	Built from nothing through military force, alliance-making, and charisma	Political manoeuvring, military campaign against father, inheritance
Military experience before peak command	20+ years of steppe warfare and tribal politics	15+ years of military command in Aquitaine
Key early challenge	Unifying dozens of competing tribal groups	Surviving within his own family's power struggles; asserting control over Aquitaine

Military tactics and innovation:

Dimension	Genghis Khan	Richard I
Primary tactical strength	Cavalry mobility; feigned retreat; coordinated multi-column operations	March discipline; siege management; real-time tactical adaptation
Key innovation	Decimal command system; integration of siege technology; use of terror as systematic policy	Naval logistics along the coast; crossbow discipline as counter to cavalry harassment
Use of intelligence	Extensive pre-campaign reconnaissance; spy networks; exploitation of merchant information	Less documented but demonstrated at Acre and in the march to Jaffa
Treatment of enemies	Calculated — surrender rewarded with mercy; resistance rewarded with annihilation	Mixed — chivalrous in some contexts (personal exchanges with Saladin); brutal in others (Ayyadieh)

Impact and legacy:

Dimension	Genghis Khan	Richard I
Scale of impact	Continental — destroyed empires, reshaped Central Asia, East Asia, and the Middle East	Regional — preserved the Crusader coastal strip; failed to recover Jerusalem
Long-term political consequence	Created the largest contiguous land empire in history; successors ruled from China to Hungary	Third Crusade confirmed the permanent division of the Holy Land; Crusader kingdom survived until 1291
Cultural legacy	Contested: hero in Mongolia; symbol of destruction in Iran and the Arab world	Romanticised as the ideal medieval king in English culture; modern historians more critical
Historiographical debate	Catastrophe vs. empire-builder; death toll figures disputed	Military genius vs. absentee king; success vs. failure depends on how you define the objective

3.2 Leadership Qualities: A Framework for Extended Responses

When Paper 1 Question 4 asks you to evaluate the military leadership of either or both leaders, organise your response around these four dimensions:

1. Vision and strategic thinking: Did the leader have clear, achievable objectives? Did their campaigns have a coherent direction?

Genghis Khan: Yes — the systematic unification of the steppe, then external conquest to secure resources and punish enemies, is strategically coherent. The use of terror as policy was calculated, not random.

Richard I: Partly — the Crusade's objective (recapture Jerusalem) was clear, but Richard's decision-making on whether to attack Jerusalem shows realistic strategic assessment rather than blind pursuit of the nominal goal. Whether this is praise (pragmatism) or criticism (failure) depends on perspective.

2. Tactical excellence: Did the leader make good decisions in the field?

Genghis Khan: Outstanding — the feigned retreat, coordinated column operations, and integration of siege technology are all marks of tactical sophistication.

Richard I: Outstanding at the tactical level — the march to Jaffa and Arsuf are classics of medieval generalship. His weakness was at the strategic/diplomatic level (the decision about Jerusalem, the prisoner massacre, the failure to secure the campaign's ultimate objective).

3. Organisation and logistics: Did the leader build the systems needed to sustain campaigns?

Genghis Khan: Exceptional — the decimal system, the Yam relay network, the acquisition of siege engineers, and the meritocratic officer corps were all organisational innovations that made sustained conquest possible.

Richard I: Strong — the logistical system for the march to Jaffa (naval supply from the fleet, division of the column into fighting and supply elements) was well-designed. However, it depended on retaining the coast and could not be extended inland.

4. Relationship with troops and subordinates: Did the leader maintain morale and discipline?

Genghis Khan: Extremely effective — the combination of meritocracy (rewarding ability), strict discipline (clear consequences for failure), and demonstrated personal courage in battle created intense loyalty. The absorption of defeated enemies into the army (rather than enslaving or killing them) also expanded loyalty beyond the original Mongol core.

Richard I: Effective on campaign — the Third Crusade's cohesion over 14 months in difficult conditions, against repeated harassment, with allied forces from multiple kingdoms who had competing agendas, is a tribute to Richard's leadership. However, his relationship with Philip II was chronically dysfunctional, and his political relationship with the Crusader barons of the Holy Land was often strained.

Section 4: Source Analysis Skills (Paper 1)

Paper 1 is a 1-hour exam with 4–5 sources and 4 questions. Sources may be written (chronicles, biographies, letters, diplomatic records) or visual (manuscript illustrations, seals, maps). For this Prescribed Subject, primary sources tend to come from medieval chronicles and biographies.

4.1 Understanding the Question Types

Question 1 (2–3 marks): "According to Source A, what was…?" — Content comprehension. Stay close to the text. Identify what the source explicitly says.

Question 2 (4 marks): Evaluate the value and limitations of ONE source using OPVL. Link all points directly to origin or purpose.

Question 3 (6 marks): Compare and contrast TWO sources. Identify both similarities and differences in message, perspective, or argument with quotation from each.

Question 4 (9 marks): "Using Sources A–E and your own knowledge, evaluate…" — Extended essay combining source analysis with historical context beyond the sources.

4.2 OPVL Framework Applied to This Prescribed Subject

Medieval sources present specific challenges for OPVL that differ from the 20th-century sources in most other Prescribed Subjects.

Common source types for Prescribed Subject 1:

Source Type	Example	Typical Value	Typical Limitation
Crusader chronicle	Roger of Hoveden, *Chronica*; Ambroise, *L'Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*	Contemporary eyewitness or near-contemporary accounts; detailed operational information	Written by Christian participants with clear religious and nationalist perspective; glorify Crusader leaders; minimise or justify Christian violence
Muslim biography/chronicle	Baha ad-Din ibn Shaddad, *The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin*; Imad ad-Din al-Isfahani	Saladin's secretary or close associate; detailed account of Saladin's perspective and decision-making; records Crusader actions from the opponent's view	Written to praise Saladin; may exaggerate Muslim virtue or Crusader barbarity; Persian/Arabic literary conventions shape presentation
Mongol source	*The Secret History of the Mongols* (written c.1227, surviving copies from 14th century)	The only Mongol-language primary source; records oral traditions about Genghis Khan's life from within the Mongol tradition	Written after Genghis Khan's death; serves the dynastic legitimacy of his successors; likely combines history with mythology; the surviving text is a later copy
Chinese official history	*Jin Shi* (History of the Jin Dynasty)	Written by Chinese historians who documented the Mongol invasions from the perspective of the victims	Written in hindsight by scholars under Mongol rule; may understate resistance or overstate inevitability; administrative perspective may miss military detail
Persian chronicle	Juvaini, *History of the World Conqueror* (c.1260)	Detailed account of the Mongol campaigns written by a Persian administrator under Mongol rule	Juvaini served the Mongol administration — his account necessarily justifies or contextualises Mongol power; written a generation after events

⚠ EXAM ALERT

Exam Alert: Many students learn a generic OPVL template and apply it mechanically to any source. Examiners penalise this. For medieval sources, you must demonstrate awareness of specific medieval source conventions: the concept of providential history (Christian chroniclers attribute outcomes to God's will), the role of patron (a chronicle written for a noble patron will present that noble positively), and the limitations of oral transmission (the *Secret History of the Mongols* was initially oral and only written down after Genghis Khan's death).

4.3 Comparing Sources (Question 3)

For this Prescribed Subject, Question 3 often pairs a Christian source with a Muslim source on the same event (a common combination is a description of Ayyadieh or the fall of Acre from both sides), or pairs sources about the same leader with contrasting assessments.

Structure for comparison:

1. **Identify the point of agreement:** What do both sources accept as fact? What conclusion or argument do they share?
2. **Identify the point of disagreement:** Where do they differ in emphasis, interpretation, or judgment?
3. **Explain the reasons for difference:** Link the difference to the sources' origins and purposes — do not simply list disagreements without explaining why they exist
4. **Brief evaluative comment:** Which source (if either) is better corroborated by other evidence?

Example frame for a source comparison question:

"Sources C and D both record the siege of Acre in 1191 and agree that Richard I played a decisive role in the city's fall. However, they differ significantly in their presentation of the massacre at Ayyadieh. Source C, a Crusader chronicle, frames the execution of prisoners as a military necessity forced by Saladin's failure to honour the agreed terms of surrender, attributing agency to Saladin's breach. Source D, from Baha ad-Din ibn Shaddad, records the event as an unprovoked atrocity, emphasising the number of victims and condemning Richard's character. The difference is explicable by origin: Source C was written for a Christian European audience that needed to justify the Crusade's violence, while Source D was written to eulogise Saladin and necessarily presents his opponent in the worst possible light. Neither source can be taken as an unbiased account of motivation, but together they corroborate the basic fact of the massacre while diverging sharply on its justification."

4.4 Using Your Own Knowledge (Question 4)

In Question 4, you must go **beyond** the sources to provide historical context. For this Prescribed Subject, this means:

1. **For Genghis Khan:** Knowledge of the Mongol tactical system (decimal organisation, feigned retreat, terror policy); the Yam relay system; the Khwarazmian campaign details; the Pax Mongolica; demographic impact estimates; the contrast between destructive conquest and subsequent trade facilitation
2. **For Richard I:** Knowledge of Hattin and the context for the Third Crusade; the logistical challenges of the march to Jaffa; the political reasons for not attacking Jerusalem; the Treaty of Jaffa's terms; the contrast between Richard's tactical success and strategic failure
3. **For comparison questions:** The similarities and differences in leadership style, tactical innovation, relationship with troops, and legacy

Integrating sources and own knowledge:

- Do not summarise each source in turn (this produces a Band 4 answer at most)
- Use sources as evidence for or against the question's proposition — they are not ends in themselves
- Use own knowledge to fill gaps left by the sources and to evaluate sources against each other

Section 5: Practice Questions

MCQ Practice (Paper 1 Style)

Question 1. At the kurultai of 1206, Temujin was given which title?

A. Khan of the Mongols

B. Genghis Khan (Universal/Oceanic Ruler) ← CORRECT

C. Emperor of China

D. Khan of Khans

Why: The title "Genghis Khan" was conferred at the 1206 kurultai — it means Universal or Oceanic Ruler. "Khan of Khans" (Khagan) was a different title used by Ögedei and later Mongol emperors. "Emperor of China" was never a Mongol self-designation; Kublai Khan took the title "Emperor of the Yuan Dynasty" much later (1271).

Question 2. What was the primary tactical innovation of the Mongol cavalry?

A. The use of heavy armoured knights charging in line formation

B. The feigned retreat, drawing enemies into pursuit and then encircling them ← CORRECT

C. Fortified camp construction before every engagement

D. The use of Greek fire in field battles

Why: The feigned retreat (tulughma) is the defining Mongol cavalry tactic — repeatedly used across campaigns against Chinese, Islamic, and Eastern European opponents. Heavy armoured charges (Option A) describe Western European knights, not Mongol style. Greek fire was a Byzantine/naval weapon, not a Mongol field tactic.

Question 3. Which of the following best explains the destruction of the Khwarazmian Empire (1219–1221)?

A. The Khwarazmian Shah allied with the Jin Dynasty against the Mongols

B. The Shah executed Mongol trade envoys, which Genghis Khan treated as a declaration of war requiring total retaliation ← CORRECT

C. The Khwarazmian Empire had previously conquered Mongol territory

D. Genghis Khan needed the Khwarazmian trade routes to supply his Chinese campaigns

Why: Shah Muhammad II's execution of Mongol envoys is the proximate cause of the campaign. Genghis Khan's response — total annihilation rather than punitive raid — was calculated to eliminate a powerful rival and demonstrate the cost of killing his representatives. Option A is false; Option C is the reverse of the historical situation; Option D misrepresents the direction of Mongol strategic priorities.

Question 4. The Battle of Hattin (1187) was significant because:

A. It was Saladin's first victory over Crusader forces

B. It destroyed the field army of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, directly enabling the fall of Jerusalem ← CORRECT

C. It resulted in the capture of Richard I by Saladin

D. It marked the beginning of the Second Crusade

Why: Hattin destroyed the Crusader army and led directly to the fall of Jerusalem three months later. Richard I was not captured by Saladin at any point (he was captured by Duke Leopold of Austria during his return journey in 1192 — a different event entirely). The Second Crusade was 1145–1149; Hattin was 1187.

Question 5. Richard I chose not to attack Jerusalem during the Third Crusade primarily because:

A. He signed a secret peace agreement with Saladin before reaching the city

B. Philip II of France ordered the Crusade to end

C. His military council concluded that even if captured, Jerusalem could not be held and supplied without most Crusaders departing ← CORRECT

D. Richard's army was destroyed at the Battle of Arsuf before reaching Jerusalem

Why: Richard's council debated the strategic problem of what would happen after Jerusalem was taken — the majority of Crusaders would complete their vow and leave, making the city indefensible. This, combined with supply difficulties and the poisoned wells, drove the decision to withdraw. Richard won at Arsuf (not lost — Option D is false). No secret peace agreement was signed before the Jerusalem campaigns.

Question 6. The Treaty of Jaffa (1192) established:

A. Muslim control of Acre for the next fifty years

B. A permanent division of the Holy Land between Christian and Muslim control

C. A three-year truce allowing Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem under Muslim sovereignty ← CORRECT

D. Richard I's right to govern Jerusalem as its king

Why: The Treaty of Jaffa was a three-year truce, not a permanent settlement (Option B). Jerusalem remained under Saladin's control — Richard was never King of Jerusalem in any meaningful sense, and Option D is false. Acre remained in Crusader hands, not Muslim hands (Option A is false).

Question 7. The *Secret History of the Mongols* is a significant source for historians studying Genghis Khan because:

A. It was written by Genghis Khan himself as a record of his campaigns

B. It is the only surviving primary source written in the Mongolian language about Genghis Khan's life and rise to power ← CORRECT

C. It was a neutral account written by Chinese historians who witnessed the Mongol conquests

D. It contains the only surviving copy of the Yasa legal code

Why: The *Secret History* is the sole surviving Mongolian-language primary source on this period. It was not written by Genghis Khan (he was illiterate, and the text was compiled after his death). It is emphatically not neutral — it serves the dynastic

legitimacy of his successors. The Yasa is referenced in multiple sources but no complete text survives.

Question 8. Which of the following best describes the Mongol policy toward religious communities in conquered territories?

A. The Mongols forcibly converted all conquered peoples to traditional Mongolian shamanism

B. Religious leaders were exempted from taxation and military service as a pragmatic policy to reduce resistance ← CORRECT

C. The Mongols destroyed all religious buildings as a matter of policy

D. The Mongols required all Muslims in conquered territories to convert to Christianity

Why: Genghis Khan's religious tolerance policy was explicit in the Yasa and consistently applied: clergy of all faiths (Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Taoist, Jewish) were exempt from tax and military service. This was partly pragmatic — reducing the motivation for religious resistance. Options A and D are false and reflect misunderstanding of Mongol religious policy. Option C is contradicted by the preservation of religious sites in cities that surrendered (contrast with cities that resisted).

Question 9. The massacre at Ayyadieh (August 1191) is historically significant because:

A. It was the largest battle of the Third Crusade

B. It resulted in Richard I being excommunicated by the Pope

C. It remains a contested event whose interpretation depends heavily on the perspective of the source, illustrating the importance of OPVL in Paper 1 ← CORRECT

D. It forced Saladin to abandon the siege of Jerusalem

Why: Ayyadieh is important precisely because Christian and Muslim sources interpret it so differently — it is a model example of why source origin and purpose matter for historical interpretation. Richard was not excommunicated. Ayyadieh was a massacre of prisoners, not a battle. Saladin was not besieging Jerusalem at this point.

Question 10. Which of the following statements about the Pax Mongolica is most accurate?

A. It refers to the peace Genghis Khan enforced between conquered peoples during his own lifetime

B. It describes the period of complete stability in Mongol-controlled territory that lasted until the empire's final collapse

C. It refers to the relative peace and trade facilitation within the Mongol Empire in the century following Genghis Khan's death, enabling Silk Road contact between Europe and China ← CORRECT

D. It was the formal name of the Treaty of Jaffa's equivalent in the Mongol world

Why: The Pax Mongolica describes the era roughly from the 1250s to the 1350s when trade and movement across the Mongol Empire's vast territory was possible — the context for Marco Polo's journey. It did not exist during Genghis Khan's own campaigns (Option A). It was not permanent or complete stability — the empire began fragmenting after 1260 (Option B). Option D is invented.

Source-Based Practice Questions

WORKED EXAMPLE

Source-Based Question 1

Read the following source, then answer the questions below.

Source A: Baha ad-Din ibn Shaddad, personal secretary to Saladin, The Rare and Excellent History of Saladin, written c.1195–1200, describing the massacre at Ayyadieh (August 20, 1191).

> "Then the king of England, may God curse him, ordered all the Muslim prisoners to be brought forward — around 2,700 men — and had them all killed. The Franks fell upon them all at once and slaughtered them in cold blood with sword and lance. Our men, observing this from the heights, could do nothing to help them. When Saladin saw what had been done, he was overwhelmed with grief and wept bitterly."

Question 1a (3 marks): According to Source A, what happened at Ayyadieh and what was Saladin's reaction?

Model Answer:

According to Source A, Richard I ordered the killing of approximately 2,700 Muslim prisoners, who were slaughtered "in cold blood with sword and lance" by Crusader forces. The author states that Muslim forces watching from the heights were unable to intervene. Saladin's reaction, as described by the author, was extreme grief — he "was overwhelmed with grief and wept bitterly" — presenting the sultan as emotionally moved by the fate of the prisoners and powerless to prevent the massacre.

Question 1b (4 marks): Evaluate the value and limitations of Source A for historians studying Richard I's military leadership.

Model Answer:

Origin and Purpose: Source A was written by Baha ad-Din ibn Shaddad, Saladin's personal secretary, who accompanied the sultan on campaign during the Third Crusade. Written between approximately 1195 and 1200 — within a few years of the events described — it is a near-contemporary source from someone with direct access to Saladin and to the Muslim military perspective. Its purpose is biographical: to record Saladin's life and conduct, presenting him as a righteous, grieving, and dignified ruler.

Value: As an account by a participant with access to Saladin's personal reactions, the source is valuable for understanding how the massacre was perceived in the Muslim camp and for establishing the basic fact that a mass killing occurred. The detail of scale (2,700 prisoners) and method ("sword and lance") is consistent with other sources, lending it some evidential weight as a record of the event itself. The source's

portrayal of Saladin's grief is valuable for understanding how medieval Islamic rulers were expected to present themselves and the symbolic importance attributed to prisoners of war.

Limitations: The source's value as an objective account of Richard I's motivations and decision-making is severely limited by its origin and purpose. Baha ad-Din's role as Saladin's secretary means the biography exists to praise Saladin and present his opponents — including Richard — in the worst possible light. The phrase "may God curse him" before Richard's name signals the author's perspective clearly. The source does not record the Crusader justification for the massacre (that Saladin had failed to meet the agreed prisoner-exchange terms), omitting context that a Crusader chronicler would have emphasised. Historians studying Richard's decision-making cannot rely on this source alone — they must corroborate it with Crusader accounts and modern analysis.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Source-Based Question 2

Source B: Ambroise, L'Estoire de la Guerre Sainte (The History of the Holy War), an Old French verse chronicle by a Norman poet who participated in the Third Crusade, written c.1195, describing the same events at Ayyadieh.

> "Then the king gave the order, and all the hostages were put to the sword; those were they who had been given to us as pledges that the city [Acre] would be surrendered and the terms kept. But the terms were broken by Saladin, for he failed to send the Cross and the money and the captives he had promised, and thus it fell out that he lost his hostages."

Question 2 (6 marks): Compare and contrast Source A and Source B as evidence for what happened at Ayyadieh and why.

Model Answer:

Sources A and B both confirm that Richard I ordered the execution of Muslim prisoners following the fall of Acre — the basic factual event is corroborated by both accounts. Both sources agree on the approximate context: a prisoner exchange that did not proceed as expected. Beyond this agreement, however, the two sources diverge fundamentally in their framing, attribution of responsibility, and moral interpretation.

Points of agreement: Both sources accept that a mass killing of prisoners occurred and that it was ordered by Richard I. Neither source questions the scale of the event. Both sources also implicitly acknowledge that a prisoner exchange had been negotiated as part of Acre's surrender — Source B explicitly mentions "pledges," while Source A's reference to Saladin watching helplessly suggests he was still in negotiations. This shared factual core gives historians confidence in the basic outline of events.

Points of difference: The sources differ completely in the attribution of responsibility. Source A presents the massacre as an unprovoked act of cruelty by Richard ("may God curse him") and makes no reference to any breach of terms by Saladin. Source B inverts this entirely: it presents the execution as a consequence of Saladin's failure to honour the agreed terms of surrender — sending the True Cross, a ransom payment, and Crusader prisoners as promised. In Source B, Saladin "lost his hostages" because he broke the agreement; the responsibility is his. Source A does not acknowledge this framing at all.

The difference in framing is explicable by origin and purpose. Source A was written to honour Saladin and present him as a righteous, grieving ruler — acknowledging his breach of terms would undermine that portrayal. Source B was written for a Christian European audience who needed to understand the Crusade as a just and holy enterprise — presenting the massacre as a response to a breach of contract made it legally and morally defensible within medieval Christian just-war theory.

Together, the sources illustrate why historians need multiple perspectives: each source is highly revealing about its author's purpose and audience, but neither alone provides a reliable account of Richard I's actual decision-making. Modern historians generally conclude that Saladin did fail to meet the agreed terms, that Richard's decision was partly military (he could not march south with thousands of hostile prisoners requiring guards), and that the massacre was both pragmatic and brutal — a combination that neither source acknowledges.

WORKED EXAMPLE

Source-Based Question 3

Source C: The Secret History of the Mongols, compiled c.1227, surviving in copies from the 14th century, describing Temujin's early hardship after his father's death.

> "When his father Yesugei Ba'atur died, his people and servants abandoned him. They said: 'He is young, he has not proved himself.' And then Temujin and his family were left alone. Heaven and earth were set against him. At this time the only thing that was loyal was his shadow. Only the horse beneath him was faithful."

Question 3 (9 marks): Using Sources A, B, and C and your own knowledge, evaluate the argument that great military leaders are primarily shaped by early hardship and disadvantage.

Model Answer:

The proposition that great military leaders are primarily shaped by early hardship has some historical basis, but it is a partial and potentially misleading explanation when tested against the evidence of both case studies in this Prescribed Subject. The sources illuminate different aspects of the question, and broader historical knowledge qualifies the argument significantly.

Source C (the *Secret History of the Mongols*) provides the most direct support for the hardship thesis in relation to Genghis Khan. The passage describes Temujin's abandonment after his father's death in terms of cosmic isolation — "heaven and earth were set against him" — and presents his subsequent survival and rise as a triumph of individual will against total vulnerability. This origin story is foundational to how the Mongol tradition interpreted Genghis Khan's greatness: the challenges of his youth explain the qualities — self-reliance, resourcefulness, absolute ruthlessness toward enemies, intense loyalty to those who remained faithful — that made him an effective commander. However, the source's limitations must inform how much weight we place on this argument. The *Secret History* was compiled to establish the dynastic legitimacy of Genghis Khan's successors; the narrative of early hardship overcome is a standard trope in the founding myths of ruling dynasties across cultures, and the document blends oral tradition with later ideological shaping. We cannot verify the events it describes as historical fact, and the rhetorical function of the passage — to make Genghis Khan's rise seem predestined — limits its value as evidence of actual causation.

Sources A and B, concerning Richard I, do not directly address his early life. Taken together, they illustrate his leadership in action (at Ayyadieh and during the Third Crusade), but they do not speak to whether hardship shaped his qualities. Historical knowledge of Richard I's background challenges the hardship thesis in his case: Richard was born a prince, educated, and trained for command from childhood. His formative military experiences (the Aquitaine campaigns, the revolt against Henry II)

were not hardships of deprivation but the regular challenges of a medieval nobleman navigating political violence within his own family. The revolt of 1173–1174, in which Richard joined his brothers against his father, was traumatic but not analogous to Temujin's survival on the steppe after abandonment. If hardship shaped Richard's qualities, it was the hardship of political betrayal and family conflict rather than physical deprivation.

Beyond the sources, broader historical knowledge qualifies the argument further. Many successful military commanders did not experience exceptional early hardship: Philip II of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great), Julius Caesar, and Napoleon all had relatively advantaged backgrounds. Conversely, many people who experienced severe early hardship did not become military leaders of any significance. Hardship may provide certain qualities — resilience, hunger for security, willingness to use extreme methods — but these qualities require additional factors: access to resources, political opportunity, the ability to attract and retain followers, and strategic intelligence. In Genghis Khan's case, all of these were present; his early hardship may have been a necessary but not sufficient cause of his later success.

The most defensible conclusion is that early hardship was one significant factor among several in shaping both leaders, and that it cannot be treated as the primary or sole explanation. For Genghis Khan, the steppe environment and early abandonment plausibly contributed to his tactical ruthlessness and his understanding of survival dynamics — but the *Secret History* is an ideologically shaped source, and the causal link should be stated as probable rather than certain. For Richard I, early hardship in the conventional sense is a weaker explanatory variable — his political formation within the Plantagenet family's power struggles is a more precise description of his formative experience. The proposition is suggestive rather than sufficient.

Closes: t-9a32