



# Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

## LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2025

### HISTORY - HIGHER LEVEL

**FIELD OF STUDY: EARLY MODERN, 1492-1815**

**Written examination: 400 marks**

**Pre-submitted Research Study Report: 100 marks**

**WEDNESDAY, 11 JUNE – AFTERNOON, 2.00-4.50**

Use **ONE** of the following sets of instructions:

**1. Usual instructions:**

- **Section 1 (100 marks)**

Documents-based question (Europe and the wider world: Topic 1)

Answer all parts of this section.

- **Section 2 (200 marks)**

Ireland: Topics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Answer **one** question from each of **two** topics.

- **Section 3 (100 marks)**

Europe and the wider world: Topics 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Answer **one** question from **one** topic.

**OR 2. Alternative instructions for 2025 only:**

- **Section 1 (100 marks)**

Documents-based question (Europe and the wider world: Topic 1)

Answer all parts of this section.

- **Sections 2 & 3 (300 marks)**

Ireland: Topics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 *and* Europe and the wider world: Topics 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Answer **three** questions from any **two** topics in Sections 2 & 3.

## SECTION 1: DOCUMENTS-BASED QUESTION

*Europe: Topic 1*

**Europe from Renaissance to Reformation, 1492-1567**

Case study to which the documents relate:

***The divorce of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon***

Study the documents opposite and answer the questions below.

1.
  - (a) Why did the French ambassador visit King Henry VIII, according to document A?
  - (b) What enquiry from the ambassador troubled the king, according to document A?
  - (c) For whom had Henry VIII a 'fatal love', according to document B?
  - (d) What was one way the king's divorce affected England, according to document B?

(20)
  
2.
  - (a) Which document, A or B, expresses greater concern for the welfare of the kingdom? Explain your answer, referring to both documents.
  - (b) To what extent do both documents confirm the importance of the monarch at that time? Explain your answer, referring to both documents.

(20)
  
3.
  - (a) Do you find the king's version of events in document A convincing? Explain your answer, making reference to the document and to your knowledge of the divorce of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon.
  - (b) Do you think that document B would have been published while Henry VIII was alive? Give reasons for your answer, making reference to the document.

(20)
  
4. What steps were taken by Henry VIII to end his marriage with Catherine of Aragon and what was their importance for England?

(40)

- Document A -

**George Cavendish worked for Cardinal Wolsey during the reign of King Henry VIII. This is an edited extract from an account of the divorce of King Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, written by Cavendish after the king's death. According to Cavendish, Henry expressed doubts about the validity of his marriage to Catherine in the following manner:**

I was troubled by words spoken to me by the French ambassador while he was here to discuss a marriage between our daughter, Princess Mary, and the Duke of Orleans, son of the King of France. The ambassador had been instructed, by his royal master, to inquire if our daughter was legitimate, because the Queen had been married to my late brother, Prince Arthur.

These words aroused scruples in my conscience and troubled my mind. I was in great doubt about God's will. Was this why God, in His indignation, has not sent me male heirs – because of my marriage to my brother's wife? The sons sent me have died prematurely. Was this a punishment from God?

Being in great doubt, I was forced to consider the good of the kingdom and the danger in which it stood for want of male issue [sons] to succeed me. Should I take another wife, my first marriage not being lawful? I considered this course only for the good of this noble realm and not at all from any dissatisfaction with the Queen.

- Document B -

**In this edited extract from the same work, Cavendish gives his personal view of King Henry VIII's behaviour.**

Above all things, there is no matter that causes rulers to be more wilful [stubborn] than foolish love. The ill effects are plain to see in this case [of Henry VIII].

What falsehoods have been invented? What noble and ancient monasteries have been overthrown, converted from the relief of the poor to worldly uses? What religious conflicts have arisen? What executions have been carried out?

In short, what changes of good and ancient laws have been brought about by the will and wilful desire of the ruler, almost to the destruction of this noble kingdom?

Indeed, the plague has not yet ceased – though the fatal love [for Anne Boleyn] lasted but a short time.

Source: both from R.S. Sylvester and D.P. Harding (eds.), *The Life and Death of Cardinal Wolsey by George Cavendish* (Oxford, Early English Text Society, 1959).

## SECTION 2: IRELAND

Refer to the instructions on the front cover when choosing which question(s) to answer.

### *Ireland: Topic 1*

#### **Reform and Reformation in Tudor Ireland, 1494-1558**

1. To what extent did Gearóid Mór Fitzgerald (8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Kildare) and Gearóid Óg Fitzgerald (9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Kildare) present a serious challenge to royal power in Ireland? (100)
2. What was the role of the professional learned classes (including brehons, bards and annalists) in Gaelic Ireland? (100)
3. To what extent did Sir Anthony St. Leger, as Lord Deputy of Ireland, favour conciliatory policies to deal with the problems he faced? (100)
4. From your study of society and economy, 1494-1558, what did you learn about two or more of the following: pastoralism and transhumance; towns and guilds; imports and exports? (100)

### *Ireland: Topic 2*

#### **Rebellion and conquest in Elizabethan Ireland, 1558-1603**

1. How did Dublin and the Pale change during the reign of Elizabeth I? (100)
2. What was the importance of the clerical career of Richard Creagh and Meiler Magrath? (100)
3. To what extent was Hugh O'Neill a skilful military and political leader? (100)
4. What was the importance of two of the following: Agnes Campbell; Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn; Grace O'Malley? (100)

### *Ireland: Topic 3*

#### **Kingdom v. colony - the struggle for mastery in Ireland, 1603-1660**

1. To what extent did the Plantation of Ulster bring about political, economic and religious change? (100)
2. Why was there a revolt in Ireland in 1641 and what form did the revolt take? (100)
3. What actions did Oliver Cromwell take in Ireland and how did he justify these actions? (100)
4. From your study of culture and religion, what was the importance of two of the following: Keating's *Foras Feasa*; Louvain; Piaras Feiritéar? (100)

*Ireland: Topic 4*  
**Establishing a colonial ascendancy, 1660-1715**

1. Why did Charles II's Irish policies satisfy neither Catholics nor Protestants? (100)
2. What were the aims of Richard Talbot, Earl of Tyrconnell, what steps did he take to achieve them, and why did he fail? (100)
3. From your study of society and economy, 1660-1715, what did you learn about two of the following: population growth and immigration; increased trade; the beginnings of the linen industry? (100)
4. What was the contribution of Dáibhí Ó Bruadair and the Jacobite poets to Irish life? (100)

*Ireland: Topic 5*  
**Colony versus kingdom – tensions in mid-18<sup>th</sup> century Ireland, 1715-1770**

1. What was the 'Protestant Nation' and how did the Ponsonbys reflect its strengths and weaknesses? (100)
2. What were the reasons for agrarian unrest and how effective were the Whiteboys in achieving their aims? (100)
3. From your study of society and economy, 1715-1770, what did you learn about two of the following: the expansion of the provision trade; model villages and planned towns; Arthur Guinness? (100)
4. What was the importance of na Cúirteanna Filíochta and/or the rise of the Dublin theatre? (100)

*Ireland: Topic 6*  
**The end of the Irish kingdom and the establishment of the Union, 1770-1815**

1. How successful were the Patriots and the Volunteers in gaining concessions from the government in the 1770s and 1780s? (100)
2. What were the reasons for the rise of Belfast? (100)
3. Which organisation was more successful in achieving its aims, the United Irishmen or the Orange Order? Argue your case, referring to both. (100)
4. What were the achievements of two of the following: Eibhlín Dhubh Ní Chonaill; Nano Nagle; Mary Anne McCracken? (100)

### **SECTION 3: EUROPE AND THE WIDER WORLD**

**Refer to the instructions on the front cover when choosing which question(s) to answer.**

#### *Europe and the wider world: Topic 2*

##### **Religion and power: politics in the later 16<sup>th</sup> century, 1567-1609**

1. What was the impact on Spain of the revolt of the Netherlands and the defeat of the Spanish Armada? (100)
2. What was the role of Admiral Coligny and/or Catherine de Medici in French affairs? (100)
3. What was the importance of two of the following: the Jesuit mission in China; Elizabethan Anglicanism; Calvinism as an international religion? (100)
4. How did Tycho Brahe contribute to science and/or how did Michel de Montaigne contribute to literature? (100)

#### *Europe and the wider world: Topic 3*

##### **The eclipse of Old Europe, 1609-1660**

1. Why did the Catalans revolt, 1640, and how do you account for their eventual defeat? (100)
2. How did Cardinal Richelieu seek to increase royal power within France and France's power in Europe? (100)
3. What was the importance of Peter Paul Rubens as a painter and diplomat and/or Hugo Grotius' contribution to politics and international affairs? (100)
4. From your study of European society, 1609-1660, what did you learn about women, work and family and/or witch-hunting? (100)

#### *Europe and the wider world: Topic 4*

##### **Europe in the age of Louis XIV, 1660-1715**

1. What were the main characteristics of the absolute monarchy of Louis XIV? (100)
2. What did Peter the Great do to modernise Russia and to extend its borders? (100)
3. What were the main activities of the English East India Company and what was its impact on the home country? (100)
4. How successfully did John Sobieski or Jan de Witt respond to the challenges he faced? (100)

*Europe and the wider world: Topic 5*  
**Establishing empires, 1715-1775**

1. What were key ideas of the Enlightenment? (100)
2. In the light of his activities at home and abroad, to what extent do you consider that Frederick II of Prussia merited the title “the Great”? (100)
3. What were the main characteristics of life on West Indies slave plantations and how did the plantations contribute to international trade? (100)
4. What did Benjamin Franklin and the Boston Tea Party contribute to the outbreak of the American Revolution? (100)

*Europe and the wider world: Topic 6*  
**Empires in revolution, 1775-1815**

1. What steps were taken to establish the American Republic, 1776-1789? (100)
2. What were the causes of the revolution that began in France in 1789? (100)
3. How did church-state relations develop in France during the period 1789-1815? (100)
4. What did Britain and/or the German states contribute to the defeat of Napoleon? (100)

**Copyright notice**

This examination paper may contain text or images for which the State Examination Commission is not the copyright owner, and which may have been adapted, for the purpose of assessment, without the author's prior consent. This examination paper has been prepared in accordance with Section 53(5) of the *Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000*. Any subsequent use for a purpose other than the intended purpose is not authorised. The Commission does not accept liability for any infringement of third-party rights arising from unauthorised distribution or use of this examination paper.

Do not hand up this question paper.

It will not be returned to the State Examinations Commission.

Leaving Certificate - Higher Level

# History

Wednesday 11 June  
Afternoon 2:00 - 4:50