



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2026

HISTORY - HIGHER LEVEL

FIELD OF STUDY: EARLY MODERN, 1492-1815

Written examination: 400 marks

Pre-submitted Research Study Report: 100 marks

WEDNESDAY, 10 JUNE – AFTERNOON, 2.00-4.50

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

1. Usual instructions:

- **Section 1 (100 marks)**
Documents-based question (Ireland: Topic 1)
Answer all parts of this section.
- **Section 2 (100 marks)**
Ireland: Topics 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Answer **one** question from **one** topic.
- **Section 3 (200 marks)**
Europe and the wider world: Topics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Answer **one** question from each of **two** topics.

OR

2. Alternative instructions:

- **Section 1 (100 marks)**
Documents-based question (Ireland: Topic 1)
Answer all parts of this section.
- **Sections 2 and 3 (300 marks)**
Ireland: Topics 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 *and* Europe and the wider world: Topics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

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

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SECTION 1: DOCUMENTS-BASED QUESTION

Ireland: Topic 1

Reform and Reformation in Tudor Ireland, 1494-1558

Case study to which the documents relate:

The Plantation of Laois-Offaly

Study the documents opposite and answer the questions below.

1.
 - (a) How do the people of Gaelic Ireland get their food in document A?
 - (b) According to document A, what is needed on the borders with the Gaelic Irish?
 - (c) What is threatened with extinction in document B?
 - (d) What is one reason, according to document B, why the people of Gaelic Ireland cannot be dealt with as the writer would wish?

(20)

2.
 - (a) Do the documents offer similar accounts of the characteristics of the people of Gaelic Ireland? Give reasons for your answer, referring to the documents.
 - (b) Do the documents agree on how the leaders of Gaelic Ireland should be treated? Give reasons for your answer, referring to the documents.

(20)

3.
 - (a) Would you consider document A to be an objective source? Give reasons for your answer, referring to the document.
 - (b) In what ways is document B a useful source for the historian investigating the Plantation of Laois-Offaly? Make reference to the document in your answer.

(20)

4. To what extent had the Laois-Offaly Plantation developed by the end of the reign of Queen Mary I in 1558?

(40)

- Document A -

In this edited extract William Thomas, writing in 1552 when a plantation of Laois-Offaly was being considered, comments on Gaelic Ireland.

The wild [Gaelic] Irish live like beasts, without any knowledge of God or good manners. Among them no justice is enforced for murder, robbery, or any other mischief. They lead a savage, idle life. They do not farm. Instead, they profit from the work of others. They reap the corn of the English Pale which they have not planted, and carry away its cattle which they have not reared.

Substantial garrisons are needed on their borders, so that they can no longer enter the Pale. Deprived of their liberty to rob and spoil, they must be brought to quiet obedience and order.

Mercy added to force would see some of these Irish chiefs rewarded with titles of honour such as earl, baron or knight. In time, this would transform them from rude, beastly, ignorant and unruly infidels [pagans] to civil, reasonable, patient, humble and well-governed Christians. The Crown is not motivated by conquest or taxes but by God's honour and a Christian peace.

Source: Constantia Maxwell (ed.), *Irish History from Contemporary Sources (1509-1610)*, (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1923).

- Document B -

This is an edited extract from Archbishop George Dowdall's *Opinion on Ireland* (1558).

The condition of Ireland has never been so bad. Scarcely a tenth part of the island is under English laws, and English power is threatened with extinction. Some means of subduing the wild [Gaelic] Irish must be found. Ideally, they would submit to Queen Mary's gentle sway [rule]. But they are too wicked, too proud, too violent a race for that. They must be overcome by force of arms. Their lands should be taken from them, they themselves banished and their homes and country planted by Englishmen.

Because of our embroilment with France and our lack of funds, this proper way of reforming such barbarous men – given to murder, robbery and deceit – cannot, at this time, be carried out. We must do what is expedient rather than what is right.

Peace must be made with the native [Gaelic] Irish. Especially, let the powerful O'Mores and O'Connors of Laois-Offaly be pacified. With the resources available we cannot subdue them. Our small army of 1,500 men makes war with them futile. A settlement must be reached with them at any cost. Their chiefs should be admitted to grace [pardoned] and given some portion of their old lands to till, manure and inhabit peacefully. The rents of Laois-Offaly, now the site of unprofitable war, will be worth at least one thousand pounds a year to the Crown.

Source: Thomas Gogarty (ed.), "Archbishop Dowdall's Opinion on Ireland" in *Journal of the County Louth Archaeological Society*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (September, 1909).

SECTION 2: IRELAND

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

Ireland: Topic 2

Rebellion and conquest in Elizabethan Ireland, 1558-1603

1. How did the opportunity arise for a plantation in Munster, how was it organised and how successful was it? (100)
2. Why is Meiler Magrath considered a controversial figure and what political and religious circumstances allowed him to flourish during the reign of Elizabeth I? (100)
3. How effectively did Agnes Campbell and/or Grace O'Malley respond to the problems she faced? (100)
4. To what extent did the Ulster rebellion, 1593, become a national war (the Nine Years' War)? (100)

Ireland: Topic 3

Kingdom versus colony: the struggle for mastery in Ireland, 1603-1660

1. Why did James I embark on a policy of plantation in Ireland and to what extent was it successful by the end of his reign, 1625? (100)
2. What were the Irish policies of Sir Thomas Wentworth and to what extent did they contribute to his fall? (100)
3. In his dealings with Ireland, how successful, as soldier and statesman, was Oliver Cromwell? (100)
4. What view of Ireland do you associate with two of the following: Keating's *Foras Feasa*; the depositions of 1641; the life and work of Piaras Feiritéar? (100)

Ireland: Topic 4

Establishing a colonial ascendancy, 1660-1715

1. To what extent were Irish Catholic hopes fulfilled during the reigns of Charles II and James II, 1660-1688? (100)
2. Who was represented in the Parliament of 1689, what laws were passed and why were those laws not enforced? (100)
3. How was Irish society and economy affected by one or more of the following: trade restrictions; cutting of woods; the growth of estate management; conditions of the peasantry? (100)
4. What was the historical and literary importance of Dáibhí Ó Bruadair and the Jacobite poets? (100)

Ireland: Topic 5

Colony versus kingdom – tensions in mid-18th century Ireland, 1715-1770

1. Who were the Ponsonbys and what was the importance of their contribution to Irish affairs? (100)
2. What conditions gave rise to the Whiteboys, what methods did the Whiteboys use and to what extent did they achieve their aims? (100)
3. How successful were Charles O'Connor and Thomas Wyse in advancing the rights of Catholics? (100)
4. From your study of culture in Ireland, 1715-1770, what was the importance of two of the following: na Cúirteanna Filíochta; native and foreign influences on traditional music; 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. What was the contribution of Henry Grattan to Irish affairs? (100)
2. Which organisation was more successful in achieving its aims, the United Irishmen or the Orange Order? Argue your case, referring to both. (100)
3. How effectively did Nano Nagle and/or Eibhlín Dhubh Ní Chonaill respond to the challenges she faced? (100)
4. What was the impact of the Act of Union on Irish affairs, 1800-1815? (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 1

Europe from Renaissance to Reformation, 1492-1567

1. Would you agree that religious developments in Tudor England rested, to a great extent, on the character of the monarch? Give reasons for your answer. (100)
2. What made it possible for Europeans to discover and conquer the New World and what was the impact of the New World on Europe? (100)
3. What were the achievements of Michelangelo Buonarroti and/or Pieter Breughel the Elder? (100)
4. What were the characteristics of Calvin's Geneva and why did Calvinism spread beyond Geneva? (100)

Europe and the wider world: Topic 2

Religion and power: politics in the later 16th century, 1567-1609

1. Who was more effective in achieving her aims, Elizabeth I or Catherine de Medici? Argue your case, referring to both. (100)
2. Why did the Revolt of the Netherlands against Spain succeed? (100)
3. To what extent did the Council of Trent and/or the Jesuit mission in China advance the interests of the Catholic Church? (100)
4. What was the importance of the work of Michel de Montaigne and/or Tycho Brahe? (100)

Europe and the wider world: Topic 3

The eclipse of Old Europe, 1609-1660

1. What was the contribution of two of the following to social and economic change, 1609-1660: women, work and family; the activities of the Dutch empire in Asia; climate change? (100)
2. What was the contribution of Cardinal Richelieu to French absolutism? (100)
3. During the period 1609-1660, to what extent was there a "military revolution", with particular reference to the Thirty Years War? (100)
4. What was the importance of the contribution of Hugo Grotius to political thought and/or René Descartes to science? (100)

Europe and the wider world: Topic 4
Europe in the age of Louis XIV, 1660-1715

1. To what extent would you agree that Louis XIV's reign was superficially splendid but essentially disastrous for France? Give reasons for your answer. (100)
2. What was the importance of the activities of the English East India Company for India and for England? (100)
3. To what extent was Peter the Great of Russia a successful reformer? (100)
4. From your study of science, 1660-1715, what was the importance of state patronage of science and/or debates within the sciences (Cartesians v. Newtonians)? (100)

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

1. What were key developments in Prussia under Frederick William I and Frederick II ('the Great')? (100)
2. What was the social and economic impact of the growth of international trade in tobacco, sugar and slaves? (100)
3. What was the contribution to the communication of ideas of two of the following: the novel and newspaper; the salon; the *Encyclopédie*? (100)
4. What were the causes of the American Revolution? (100)

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

1. What were the causes of the French Revolution? (100)
2. How did the agricultural and industrial revolutions contribute to the growth of Manchester? (100)
3. How did other countries react to events in France, 1789-1815? (100)
4. From your study of culture, 1775-1815, what was the importance of two of the following: cultural nationalism; Mary Wollstonecraft; Ludwig van Beethoven? (100)

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Leaving Certificate - Higher Level

History

Wednesday 10 June
Afternoon 2:00 - 4:50