



Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit State Examinations Commission

LEAVING CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2026

HISTORY – ORDINARY 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:

Answer Sections 1, 2 and 3 inside.

- **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 on **one** topic from this section.
- **Section 3 (200 marks)**
Europe and the wider world: Topics 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Answer on each of **two** topics from this section.

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 parts A, B, and C from **two** topics in Sections 2 and 3.
 - Answer an extra part B and an extra part C from one of your two chosen topics.
 - Answer the part A questions on page 15.

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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) Which Gaelic chieftains in Laois-Offaly were to receive land, according to document A?

 (b) Where were they to receive land, according to document A?

 (c) According to document A, what was the earlier name of Philipstown?

 (d) Why could crops not be planted, according to document B?

 (e) Who was to decide what rents were to be paid, according to document B?

(40)

2. (a) Do the documents note what is to be required of those who receive land?
 Explain your answer, referring to both documents.

 (b) What garrisons were already in existence?
 Explain your answer, referring to both documents.

(20)

3. (a) Is document A a primary source or a secondary source?
 Give a reason for your answer, referring to the document.

 (b) What evidence is there in document B that Queen Elizabeth was not pleased
 with the progress of the Plantation of Laois-Offaly?
 Support your answer with reference to the document.

(20)

4. What was the purpose of the Plantation of Laois-Offaly and did it achieve its purpose?

(20)

– Document A –

This edited extract deals with Lord Deputy Sussex and the Plantation of Laois-Offaly.

In April, 1556, instructions from Queen Mary I to Sussex included a plan for the Gaelic chieftains of Laois and Offaly. If they were co-operative they should be settled on the western third of the territory along the River Shannon.

Outside the Gaelic reservation six ploughlands were to be assigned to Fort Protector [Maryborough] and Fort Governor [Philipstown] to make their existing garrisons more secure.

The rest of the land was to be distributed among those men born in England or Ireland who would be loyal to the Crown.

All were to farm the land, build houses of timber and stone and follow English law and customs.

Source: Steven G. Ellis, *Tudor Ireland, 1470-1603: Crown, Community and the Conflict of Cultures* (London and New York, Longman, 1985).

– Document B –

This is an edited extract from a letter, May 1559, from Queen Elizabeth I to Sussex.

Our two counties of Laois and Offaly are not yet planted, being occupied only by our garrisons. They are unpopulated wastes and their cost to us can only increase.

The growing season of the year is over, the crops cannot be planted, nor can houses and towns be easily built.

You should introduce settlers to such areas as you can, to increase tillage for the production of crops. We leave to your judgement the rents to be paid and the terms to be offered to tenants.

Source: quoted in John Canon O'Hanlon, *History of the Queen's County, Volume II* (Dublin, Sealy, Bryers and Walker, 1907).

SECTION 2: IRELAND

Ireland: Topic 2

Rebellion and conquest in Elizabethan Ireland, 1558-1603

A (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

In this edited extract historian Richard Bagwell (1840-1918) criticises Meiler Magrath. Read it and answer the questions which follow.

Meiler Magrath was no credit either to the Catholic Church which he deserted or the Protestant Church which he joined. In 1607 he had been Archbishop of Cashel and Bishop of Emly for thirty-six years. Both dioceses were found to be in a terrible state.

Emly Cathedral was in ruins and things were little better in Cashel. "In the two dioceses," it was reported, "there is not one minister to teach the people their duties to God and His Majesty."

Source: Richard Bagwell, *Ireland Under the Tudors, Vol. III* (London, Longman Green and Co., 1890).

1. Which church did Meiler Magrath leave?
2. Which church did he join?
3. What was one diocese associated with him?
4. In what condition was Emly Cathedral?
5. Why was Meiler Magrath sometimes of use as a negotiator in Elizabethan Ireland?

B (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

Write a short paragraph on **one** of the following:

1. Archbishop Adam Loftus.
2. Grace O'Malley.
3. Elizabethan Dublin.
4. Recusancy in Ireland, 1559-1603.

C (40 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 15 minutes

Answer **one** of the following:

1. What were the aims of Shane O'Neill and did he achieve them?
2. Why was Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn important in Gaelic Ireland?
3. Why was there a plantation in Munster and how was it organised?
4. What leadership did Hugh O'Neill provide in the Nine Years' War?

Ireland: Topic 3
Kingdom versus colony – the struggle for mastery in Ireland, 1603-1660

A (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

This edited extract refers to Elizabeth Butler, Countess of Ormond. Read it and answer the questions which follow.

In 1633, Elizabeth Butler became the Countess of Ormond on her husband's succession to the earldom. On the outbreak of the 1641 rebellion she moved to Kilkenny Castle, the family seat [residence].

When the city became the capital of the Catholic Confederation she assisted Protestant refugees, giving them shelter in the Castle.

In 1647, she followed her husband to England on his surrender of Dublin to parliamentary forces. When he decided to renew his fight for the Royalist cause she departed for France.

Source: based on Elizabeth Butler entry in *Dictionary of Irish Biography Volume 2* (Cambridge, CUP, 2009).

1. When did Elizabeth Butler become Countess of Ormond?
2. To where did she move in 1641?
3. How did she assist Protestant refugees?
4. Why did she go to England in 1647?
5. Why, briefly, was Elizabeth Butler an important historical figure?

B (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

Write a short paragraph on **one** of the following:

1. Sir Arthur Chichester.
2. The trial of Strafford, 1641.
3. The depositions of 1641.
4. Keating's *Foras Feasa*.

C (40 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 15 minutes

Answer **one** of the following:

1. What was the purpose of the Irish College in Louvain and what did it achieve?
2. How did Archbishop Rinuccini and/or Owen Roe O'Neill influence events in Ireland?
3. What was the importance of Piaras Feiritéar and/or Luke Wadding?
4. What were the main events of Cromwell's campaign in Ireland?

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

A (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

Rapparees were outlaws and bandits who robbed houses and travellers or extorted protection money. This edited extract, from their time, describes how they operated. Read it and answer the questions which follow.

When the rapparees do not wish to show their faces on the bogs they sink down into long grass, so that it would be as easy to find a hare as one of them.

They hide their weapons in this way: they take the lock off their musket and put it in their pocket or hide it in some dry place; they close the muzzle with a cork and the touch-hole with a small feather; they throw the weapon itself into running water or a pond.

But, when they want to do mischief, they can be ready in an hour. Everyone knows where to find his weapon, though you do not.

Source: quoted in W.A. Maguire (ed.), *Kings in Conflict* (Belfast, Blackstaff Press, 1990).

1. What were rapparees?
2. Where did they hide the lock off their musket?
3. Where did they hide the weapon itself?
4. How long did they take to get ready to do mischief?
5. What was one political view associated with rapparees and tories?

B (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

Write a short paragraph on **one** of the following:

1. The Parliament of 1689.
2. Oliver Plunkett.
3. Robert Boyle.
4. Restoration Dublin.

C (40 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 15 minutes

Answer **one** of the following:

1. To what extent were the policies of Charles II unpopular in Ireland?
2. What were the themes of the Jacobite poets?
3. How successful was Patrick Sarsfield as a military leader?
4. What was the contribution of Samuel Louis Crommelin to Irish affairs?

Ireland: Topic 5
Colony versus kingdom – tensions in mid-18th century Ireland, 1715-1770

A (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

This is an edited extract from an account of a house in Suffolk Street, Dublin, rented in 1752 by William Fitzwilliam. Read it and answer the questions which follow.

It is not very large but it has many conveniences. The rent is seventy pounds a year and I have taken it for three years.

Underground there is a good front kitchen with stoves and a scullery, with a supply of water three days a week. There is a good back kitchen, with boilers. Also, a good larder, wine cellar and vaults for coals.

The ground floor has a front parlour, back parlour and a large salon. There are closets on all three floors and two good attics.

Source: Conor Lucey (ed.), *House and Home in Georgian Ireland: Spaces and Cultures of Domestic Life* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2002).

1. Who rented the house and how much was the rent?
2. How was the scullery equipped?
3. What were the vaults for?
4. What accommodation was available at the top of the house?
5. Name one important building associated with Georgian Dublin.

B (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

Write a short paragraph on **one** of the following:

1. The Ponsonbys.
2. Margaret (Peg) Woffington.
3. Turlough O'Carolan.
4. Na Cúirteanna Filíochta.

C (40 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 15 minutes

Answer **one** of the following:

1. What conditions gave rise to the Whiteboys and were their methods successful?
2. What evidence was given at the trial of Father Nicholas Sheehy and what was its outcome?
3. In what ways did Dean Swift contribute to Irish affairs?
4. How did Arthur Guinness contribute to the development of Irish industry?

Ireland: Topic 6

The end of the Irish kingdom and the establishment of the Union, 1770-1815

A (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

This edited extract, from a letter dated 27 March 1772, describes an attack by Steel Boys on a “big house” in Co. Wexford. Read it and answer the questions which follow.

Last night 200 of them came to my Uncle Daniel’s about 12 o’clock. They set fire to his barn and stable, a hay stack and a quantity of straw in another stack.

They took shelter and fired constantly at the house. Its defenders, although they fired out, could not get a clean shot at them.

Further loss consists of a large quantity of oats, some wheat, and timber which had been stored in the stable.

Almost all of their fodder is gone. All their windows were broken. But the horses were saved.

Source: W.H. Crawford and B. Trainor, *Aspects of Irish Social History, 1750-1800* (Belfast, Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1973).

1. How soon after the attack was this letter written?
2. What did the Steel Boys set on fire?
3. What was one foodstuff lost in the attack?
4. What damage was done to the house?
5. What was one aim of the Whiteboys?

B (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

Write a short paragraph on **one** of the following:

1. Henry Grattan.
2. The Orange Order.
3. Fr. Arthur O’Leary.
4. Why Ireland’s population grew, 1770-1815.

C (40 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 15 minutes

Answer **one** of the following:

1. What did Eibhlín Dhubh Ní Chonaill and/or Nano Nagle contribute to Irish life?
2. What factors led to the rise of Belfast?
3. What did Wolfe Tone hope to achieve and why did he fail?
4. What main events took place during the Wexford Rebellion, 1798?

SECTION 3: EUROPE AND THE WIDER WORLD

Europe and the wider world: Topic 1

Europe from Renaissance to Reformation, 1492-1567

A (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

This edited extract refers to Calvin's Geneva. Read it and answer the questions which follow.

When the time comes for the marriage service the parties should arrive at church without drummers or fiddlers. They shall present themselves in a way proper to Christians, before the church bell rings, so that the marriage can be blessed before the sermon. If they are late or negligent, then they should be sent away.

Also, during married life, when children arrive, the use of the names of the patron saints is forbidden. That would be an encouragement to superstition and idolatry. The names of kings are forbidden too.

Source: G.R. Potter and M.G. Greengrass (eds.), *John Calvin: Documents of Modern History* (London, St. Martin's Press, 1983).

1. What was one way in which the couple should arrive at church?
2. What was to happen if they were late?
3. What names were not to be used for children?
4. Why were these names forbidden?
5. What was one religious idea put forward by Calvin?

B (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

Write a short paragraph on **one** of the following:

1. The development of printing.
2. Niccolò Machiavelli.
3. Jacob Fugger.
4. The Counter-Reformation.

C (40 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 15 minutes

Answer **one** of the following:

1. Why did Henry VIII want to divorce Catherine of Aragon and what steps did he take to do so?
2. What were the achievements of Michelangelo Buonarroti?
3. In what ways did the discovery of the New World affect Europe?
4. What part did Martin Luther play in the Reformation in Germany?

Europe and the wider world: Topic 2
Religion and power: politics in the later sixteenth century, 1567-1609

A (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

In this edited extract Matteo Ricci writes about the beginning of the Jesuit mission in China. Read it and answer the questions which follow.

For fear the new religion might cause suspicion among the Chinese, the Fathers did not speak openly about religious matters when they first appeared in public.

As well as receiving visitors, they spent time studying the Chinese language, the methods of writing and the customs of the people.

They hoped to impress the Chinese by example and by the sanctity [holiness] of their lives.

They wore the ordinary Chinese outer garment, which was somewhat similar to their own religious habits: a long robe reaching down to the heels and very wide sleeves.

Source: Louis J. Gallagher, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journal of Matthew Ricci, 1583-1610* (New York, Random House, 1953).

1. What did the Jesuit Fathers fear?
2. What was one thing they studied?
3. How did they hope to impress the Chinese?
4. What were the features of the garment worn by them?
5. What was one achievement of the Jesuit mission in China?

B (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

Write a short paragraph on **one** of the following:

1. Techniques of land use in Europe, 1567-1609.
2. The rise of Muscovy.
3. Jacobus Arminius.
4. Tycho Brahe.

C (40 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 15 minutes

Answer **one** of the following:

1. What was the purpose of the Spanish Armada and why did it fail?
2. What role did William the Silent play in the Revolt of the Netherlands?
3. How successful a ruler of France was Catherine de Medici?
4. Why is Michel de Montaigne considered a key personality of this period?

Europe and the wider world: Topic 3
The eclipse of Old Europe, 1609-1660

A (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

This edited extract refers to climate change. Read it and answer the questions which follow.

Environmental historians now recognise the seventeenth century as a period of intense climate change, the peak of the Little Ice Age – a period of severe cooling in which average yearly temperatures, in the northern hemisphere, plunged by as much as two degrees Celsius.

Crop failure led to food shortages. An unusual rate of volcanic activity hurled enough sulphur dioxide into the upper stratosphere to dim the sun for decades, contributing to already low temperatures and stunting crops.

All of which led to a search for people to blame. In southern Germany in 1626 a spring hailstorm, followed by sudden Arctic temperatures, prompted the torture and execution of 900 men and women, accused of creating the storm by witchcraft.

Source: based on material in Timothy Grieve-Carlson, “Darkening Skies”, *History Today* (February, 2025).

1. What was one key feature of the climate change mentioned?
2. What led to food shortages?
3. What dimmed the sun?
4. What weather conditions led to the events of 1526?
5. What was “witch-hunting”?

B (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

Write a short paragraph on **one** of the following:

1. Women, work and family.
2. Claudio Monteverdi.
3. The Dutch empire in Asia.
4. Albrecht von Wallenstein.

C (40 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 15 minutes

Answer **one** of the following:

1. Why did the Catalans revolt and how was the revolt put down?
2. What did Cardinal Richelieu contribute to the rise of French absolutism?
3. What were the achievements of Peter Paul Rubens and/or Gian Lorenzo Bernini?
4. What were the achievements of Galileo and/or Descartes?

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

A (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

This edited extract refers to early eighteenth-century Moscow. Read it and answer the questions which follow.

Moscow was a dangerous and violent place. The town consisted almost entirely of wooden buildings. Clustered together in narrow streets, they were the subject of devastating fires.

In the summer of 1706 the English Ambassador had to flee his house as fire took hold. "God be thanked my house still stands," he wrote, "but all the street around me is burnt down!"

Moscow was notorious for its beggars and thieves. It was an expensive place in which to live. "My pocket is empty," the Ambassador complained. He soon came to realise that nothing could be achieved without generous bribes and presents to the Russian ministers.

Source: based on material in Janet Hartley, "Losing my Best Days: Charles Whitworth, First British Ambassador to Russia", *History Today* (June, 2000).

1. What was one feature of the architecture of Moscow?
2. For what was Moscow notorious?
3. Why did the English Ambassador flee his home?
4. What did he come to realise?
5. What was one reason for the expansion of cities, 1660-1715?

B (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

Write a short paragraph on **one** of the following:

1. Anti-Popery in England.
2. Poland under Sobieski.
3. The Grand Tour.
4. Peter the Great's travels abroad.

C (40 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 15 minutes

Answer **one** of the following:

1. Why did Louis XIV establish his court at Versailles and what were the characteristics of life there?
2. What were the main events in the career of Sir Henry Morgan?
3. What changes took place in agriculture during the period 1660-1715?
4. What were the achievements of Isaac Newton and/or Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz?

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

A (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

This edited extract refers to Robert Clive. Read it and answer the questions which follow.

In 1756 the Nawab of Bengal attacked the English East India Company's settlement at Calcutta. His treatment of his English prisoners, many of whom suffocated in the soon legendary "Black Hole of Calcutta", gave additional offence.

The East India Company's army, commanded by its employee, Robert Clive, took the city and then, on 22 June 1757, won a battle over the Nawab's much larger forces at Plassey, about 100 miles from Calcutta.

Clive emerged as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Bengal, by which time the Mughal Emperor had granted the East India Company responsibility for the administration of the area, including the right to collect taxes.

Source: based on material in J.M. Roberts, *The Pelican History of the World* (London, Pelican, 1980).

1. Who attacked the East India Company's settlement in Calcutta?
2. What happened in the "Black Hole of Calcutta"?
3. What disadvantage did Robert Clive have at Plassey?
4. What major concession was made by the Mughal Emperor?
5. What were the circumstances of Clive's death?

B (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

Write a short paragraph on **one** of the following:

1. Maria Theresa of Austria.
2. Poverty, disease and population growth.
3. Road and canal building.
4. The salon.

C (40 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 15 minutes

Answer **one** of the following:

1. What was the importance of the *Encyclopédie*?
2. How important a leader was Catherine the Great?
3. In what ways did the West Indies slave plantations contribute to international trade?
4. What did you learn about the life and work of Benjamin Franklin?

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

A (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

This edited extract notes an aspect of the French Reign of Terror. Read it and answer the questions which follow.

In the capital sat the highest court of revolutionary France, the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris, which had been established in the spring of 1793 to deal with enemies of the revolution. Its activities were stepped up in October, 1793, when the desire for vengeance against traitors to the republic seems to have reached its peak.

Among the most prominent victims at this time were the Queen, Marie Antoinette, and several former generals who had not shown sufficient enthusiasm for the new regime. All met their death on the guillotine which stood on the Place de la Revolution.

The Revolutionary Tribunal was responsible for 2,639 victims. Estimates of the total number of victims under the Reign of Terror reach 20,000.

Source: Charles Breunig, *The Age of Revolution and Reaction, 1789-1850* (New York, Norton, 1977).

1. Why was the Revolutionary Tribunal set up?
2. What reached its peak by October, 1793?
3. What prominent victims of the Tribunal are mentioned?
4. How and where were the victims executed?
5. What, briefly, was the impact on France of the Reign of Terror?

B (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

Write a short paragraph on **one** of the following:

1. Mary Wollstonecraft.
2. The Agricultural Revolution.
3. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy.
4. Madame de Staël.

C (40 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 15 minutes

Answer **one** of the following:

1. Why did Louis XVI become unpopular in France and how was he overthrown?
2. How did Manchester become a great industrial city?
3. What changes did Napoleon make in France and Europe?
4. What developments led to the abolition of the slave trade?

Answer the questions below if you are following the **Alternative Instructions** on the front cover of this examination paper.

A (30 marks)

Recommended maximum time: 10 minutes

This edited extract refers to bardic schools and to those who were trained in them. Read it and answer the questions which follow.

The file ["poet" or "bard"], the product of the bardic schools, was employed by a patron, the local chieftain, to praise him and his family, to note his famous ancestors, and to mourn his death.

The filí were an extremely influential group in society and it was they who set the written standard of Irish. Poetry was a profession, usually handed down from father to son. It required a special training in language, which was provided by bardic schools.

Source: based on material in Aidan Doyle, *A History of the Irish Language* (Oxford, OUP, 2015).

1. Who employed the poet?
2. What was the duty of the poet while his employer was alive?
3. What was required of the poet when his employer died?
4. What special training did the poet have and where did he acquire it?
5. Briefly, what was the role of the brehon in Gaelic Ireland?

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Leaving Certificate - Ordinary Level

History

Wednesday 10 June
Afternoon 2:00 - 4:50