

Leaving Cert History

Headings	Notes
1. Exploring the Past	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The past is all around us. You will find traces of it in buildings, monuments, museum exhibitions, art galleries, online games, podcasts, television shows and movies. People look to the past to provide a justification for their attitudes, ideas or demands. KEY IDEA: The past refers to all those events that have led up to now, i.e. what people in earlier times have said and done. However, the past is gone. It cannot be relived. So how can we ever know what actually happened in the past? This is where history comes in. KEY IDEAS: History is the study of the past. The job of the historian is to uncover the truth about the past. The truth is what really happened. Not everything that has occurred in the past attracts the historian's interest; only significant events involving human beings, such as alliances, artistic achievements, battles, betrayals, blockades, conquests, disasters, discoveries, elections, explorations, famines, innovations, invasions, inventions, migrations, monuments, movements, persecutions, plagues, protests, recessions, reforms, revolutions, scandals and treaties. <p style="text-align: center;">THINK ABOUT IT!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant event is one that passes the 5 Rs test. To be called 'significant' an event must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be remarkable Important both at the time it occurred and since. Be remembered Remained within a people's collective memory. Be revealing Offer insights into human life in the past. Be resonant Still relevant even though it happened long ago. Result in change Have affected the lives of people living long after.
2. The Historian at Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historians investigate the knowable past, i.e. those past events for which we have evidence. KEY IDEA: Evidence refers to information about an event. The historian's job is similar to that of a detective. They search for answers to five key questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What happened? When did it happen'? Who was involved? Why did it happen? How did it affect people's lives? Historians find answers to these questions in sources. KEY IDEA: A source is anything that provides us with evidence about human life in the past. There are two types of sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Primary sources Sources that come directly from the period being investigated. They offer us a direct connection to the ideas and way of life of previous generations. They may be written (e.g. a personal diary), oral (e.g. a recorded interview with an eyewitness) or visual (e.g. film footage or a photograph).

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2. The Historian at Work	<p>(b) Secondary sources Sources that come from a time after these original, primary sources but are based on them. Example: a history textbook.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• REMEMBER! Primary sources are stored in archives and museums.• The historian sifts through sources to locate evidence that supports his/her interpretation.• KEY IDEA: An interpretation offers an explanation of a past event.• Before drawing any conclusions from a source, historians should always try to find out if it is reliable (i.e. accurate and trustworthy). They do this by checking what one source says against other sources, to see if the latter ones corroborate (i.e. confirm/support) what the former source says.• Only after carefully studying all the available evidence should a historian put forward their own interpretation of a significant event.• Historians present their findings in (a) a book, (b) an article in a scholarly journal, or (c) a documentary film.
3. The Limits of History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like us, historians are fallible. We need to remember that:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Even though they may have access to the same evidence, different historians may draw different conclusions from it. They may offer conflicting interpretations of the same event.• Any historical explanation will only be as good as the available evidence allows. Since no source is ever perfect or totally impartial, any historical interpretation will be an imperfect reflection of what actually happened.• A historian's interpretation of some past event may have to be revised or even rejected if new evidence comes to light.• This said, the ultimate goal of every historian is to discover the truth about the past, in so far as the surviving evidence allows it. This is why the main principle underlying the Leaving Certificate History syllabus is: 'The study of history should be regarded as an exploration of what historians believe to have happened, based on enquiry into the available evidence.'
4. The Importance of History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is often said that we can learn lessons from history. however, 'history' itself does not teach us any lessons - historians do. Some do so more successfully and wisely than others.<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We study history to help us make sense of the world we live in and to figure out our place in it. It can help us to find answers to questions such as: How did we get to where we are today? Why do we think, speak and act as we do?• Studying history can bring us into contact with remarkable people from earlier times. Their stories can offer us inspiration and encouragement.• Historians often disagree about what actually happened in the past. This is why history as a subject is both fascinating and challenging. An engaging, well-written and thoroughly researched historical work can encourage us to ask questions about important things that we take for granted.

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5. The HL History Syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• KEY IDEA: The syllabus is a document that sets out the history course to be covered.• You must study four topics: two from the history of Ireland and two from Europe and the Wider World. Each topic is organised as follows:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. It is approached from three perspectives (i.e. points of view). These are:<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Politics and administrationb. Society and economyc. Culture, religion and science2. Within each perspective there is one case study (an in depth investigation).3. Several key personalities are listed for each topic. You may be asked about the impact and significance of their actions.
6. The Forms of Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your assessment has two parts:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Examination Paper<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. This is a written assessment.b. It is two hours and 50 minutes long.c. It is worth 400 marks (80% of the total marks awarded).2. The Research Subject Report (RSR)<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. This is a written assignment.b. You submit it before you sit the examination paper.c. You must write a report on a topic of personal interest. This topic must be acceptable underd. the State Examination Commission's guidelines and approved by your teacher.e. It is worth 100 marks (20% of the total marks awarded).