

1.0 Learning Intentions

After this week's lesson you will be able to;

- I. Be Familiar with the layout for both the Higher and Ordinary level papers
- II. Understand the Document question
- III. Know what is involved in the Research Topic
- IV. Understand what topics we will be studying for your Leaving Certificate exam.
- V. Know how to use a Timeline
- VI. Learn how to plan an essay

1.1 Sources

Historical Sources can be divide into two main categories:

Primary Sources

A Primary Source provides first hand evidence. They are composed or made at the event took place. Examples of primary sources include diaries, photographs, letters, interviews given or books written by those who witness the events firsthand.

Advantages

1. First Hand Knowledge
2. Captures the Mood of the time
3. Can express the views of ordinary people

Disadvantages

1. May be Biased
2. Is not objective only tells one side of the story
3. May only record what they want people to remember

Secondary Sources

Secondary Sources involves information which is gathered by someone who did not witness the events that they are examining. Your **History textbook** is the perfect example of a Secondary source. They are normally written from a study of various Primary sources and may also take account of the interpretations of historians that have studied the period under question.

Advantages

1. Less Likely to be biased.
2. Takes account of different sides to the story.
3. Can judge an event or person by looking at their impact over a period of time.

Disadvantages

1. Can not fully capture the Mood of the time.
2. Primary sources as evidence have more of an impact than secondary sources in changing our views/opinions on historical events and figures.
3. Modern Historians may view the past using today's moral compass therefore judging people and the events out of context.

It is important to remember that just because a source is Primary, that does not necessarily mean that it is automatically 'better' or more 'reliable' than a secondary source.

Historical Sources: To Trust or not to Trust?

All sources of historical evidence must be analysed to determine their reliability. It is important therefore to check sources for examples of the following:



Bias

Giving preference to a particular viewpoint.

Objectivity

Presenting the information in a way, which does not give favour to one particular viewpoint.

Selectivity

Telling only part of the story.

Balance

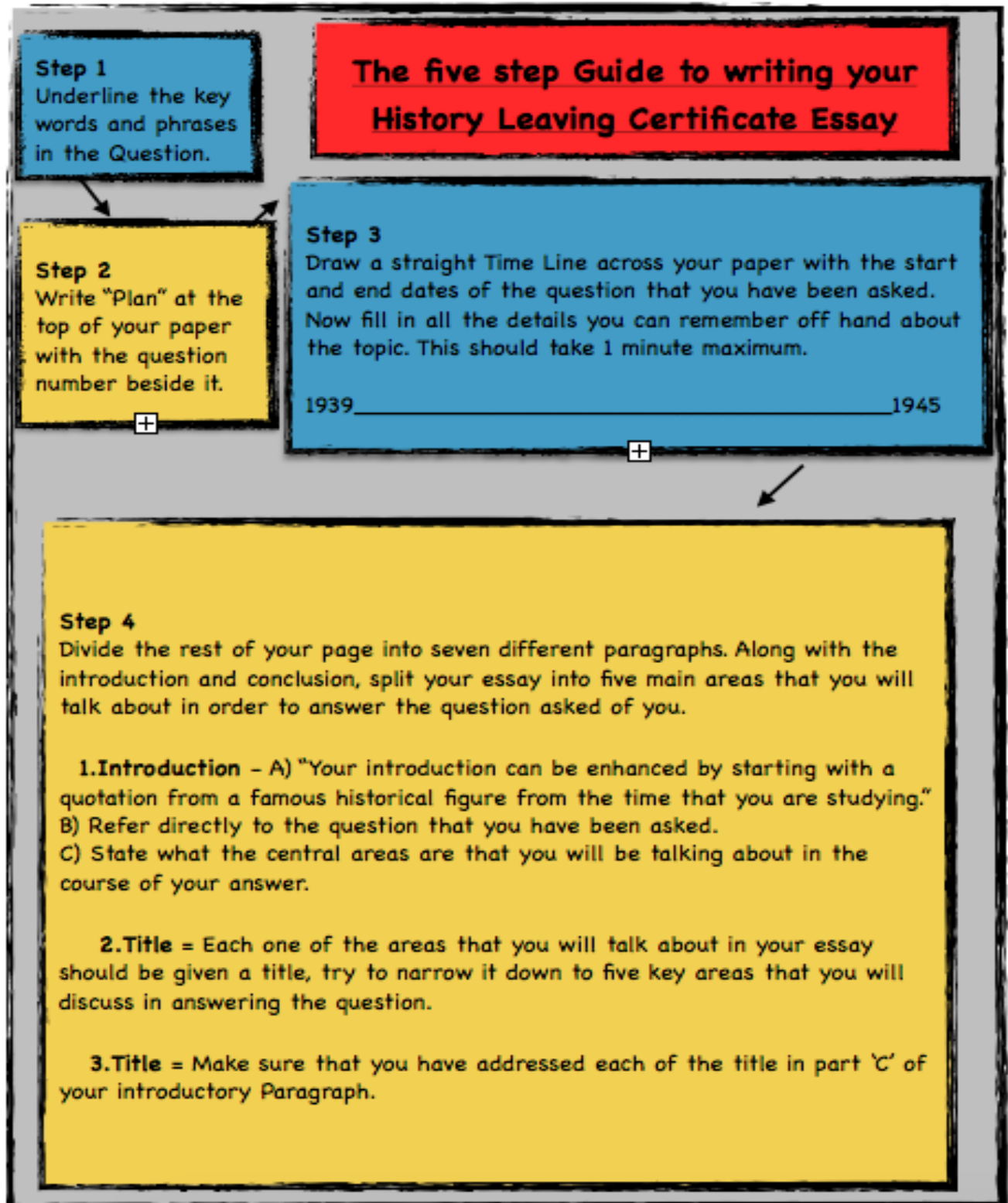
Giving equal information on the various interpretations of an event.

Subjectivity

An account where the source gives their own personal opinion/point of view.

Propaganda

Official government communications to the public that are designed to influence opinion. The information may be true or false, but it is always carefully selected and possibly exaggerated for its political effect.



4.Title = Plan out each paragraph using the paragraph title as a means of brainstorming information that you could include as part of your essay.

5.Title = Refer to the essay title at the start of each paragraph to maintain a focus on the question you have been asked.

6.Title = You should aim to have at least 30 significant Historical points to achieve a top score in the Cumulative Marks which is marked out of 60% of the total marks for the essay. The other 40% of marks will be on offer for Overall Impression which will require you to have a focused, logical response to the essay question.

7.Conclusion = A) Refer to the question that you have been asked to discuss.

B) State the main areas of your essay that you have talked about in the course of your answer.

C) What was the historical significance of the events you have studied on the country/Person/etc concerned

Step 5

Your exam is 2 hours and 50 minutes in length.

Therefore give yourself 40 minutes for each of the four questions and once your 40 minutes is up move on to the next Question. You will have 10 minutes at the end to come back to finish off your essay then.

Use this checklist to ensure that you have completed the research study as required.

Title:

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1. Have I written down the full title of my research study in the booklet?
2. Is the subject of my research clearly and concisely stated in my title?
3. Have I included the date parameters of my research study in the title?
4. Are the dates of my research study located in the period before 1993 if my subject relates to Irish history or before 1992 if my subject relates to the history of Europe and the wider world?

Outline Plan:

5. Have I responded to each of the requirements laid down for the Outline Plan?
 - a. Define and justify the proposed subject of study;
 - b. Identify the aims;
 - c. Identify the intended approach;
6. Cite at least two sources at Ordinary level or at least three at Higher level.
7. Have I ensured that the aims I have set down are sufficiently focused on my subject?
8. Have I ensured that at least one of my sources is written by an historian?
9. Have I cited my sources fully and accurately?
10. Have I cited any website source that I used fully and accurately?
11. Have I completed my Outline Plan on the relevant page of the booklet?

The Evaluation of the Sources:

12. Have I evaluated each of the sources that I cited fully in my Outline Plan?
13. Have I commented on the relevance of each source to the subject of my study?
14. Have I commented on the strength and weaknesses of each source to the subject of my study?
15. Have I completed the Evaluation of the Sources on the relevant page of the booklet?

The Extended Essay:

16. Have I set down my findings and conclusions under the appropriate heading in a coherent manner, with a clear introduction and conclusion, and a line of logical development in between?
17. Have I addressed in my essay the aims that I set down in my Outline Plan?
18. Have I ensured that the essay is sufficiently focused on the title of my study?
19. Have I included a review of the research process in my essay?
20. Have I made clear in my review how useful the research process I undertook was in addressing the aims laid down in my Outline Plan?
21. Have I ensured that my review is specific to the subject of my research study?
22. Have I ensured that my Extended Essay consists of 1200-1500 words HL/ 600-800 words OL, including my review?
23. Have I written the word length of my Extended Essay in the appropriate space on the cover of the booklet?

Finally:

24. Have I kept notes and rough drafts prepared as part of the research study, including tapes and/or transcripts of oral history testimony (where appropriate)?
25. Have I submitted my report to my teacher and signed the appropriate form?

Adjustments for 2026 Examination

LEVEL	PRE-ADJUSTED ARRANGEMENTS	ADJUSTMENTS FOR 2026
Higher	RSR (RESEARCH STUDY REPORT) WRITTEN EXAMINATION Section 1: Documents-Based Question (100 marks). Section 2: Answer one question from one topic on Irish History (100m). Section 3: Answer one question from each of two topics on Europe and the Wider World (2 x 100m).	RSR (RESEARCH STUDY REPORT) No adjustment. As the briefs for this coursework issued in the 2024/25 school year, the normal timelines for completion apply. WRITTEN EXAMINATION Candidates may answer the paper in the usual way, if they wish. OR Section 1: answer the DBQ as normal. Sections 2 and 3: answer three questions from two topics in Section 2: Ireland and Section 3: Europe and the Wider World, as set out below. This means that candidates would answer two questions from one of their chosen topics. A candidate could decide to answer one of the following combinations: • Two answers from one Irish topic and one answer from a topic in Europe and the Wider World. • One answer from one Irish topic and two answers from one topic in Europe and the Wider World. • All three answers from two topics in Europe and the Wider World.