



Secondary school students (from left) Wilme Verwoerd, Shauna Colgan, Aibhlin O'Leary and Anne O'Donovan take part in a mock trial in the Four Courts. Photograph: Eric Luke

Don't throw your ticks around wildly, as you'll have to write a bit about why you communicated with *one* of these people as part of the action project – eg “I was on the jury in a mock trial, so we had to discuss the verdict”, or “I had to approach the principal to get permission to do a survey among the students”.

You should do really well in Section 3(b): here, you have to write a list of the activities done as part of the action project, with a brief description of each activity. These can be any activities, not just what you did yourself, eg “Some students got the room ready for the guest speaker”, “A group of students prepared questions for the guest speakers”, or “One student took the role of the judge in our mock trial”.

You'll have two blank pages for this, so use them. As regards layout, a bullet-point approach with headings should make your points stand out clearly. I'd recommend not writing this in essay style.

In Section 3(c), you'll need to get more specific, and write a detailed account of *one* task or activity *you* were involved in.

This must be one of those mentioned in the previous section. It doesn't have to be something you did on your own – you may well have done it as part of a group, eg “I was involved in preparing questions for the visiting speaker”, or “I made arrangements for our visit to the local courthouse”.

But this is only the start. Your account must be detailed, so don't pick too narrow a task. Choose something that has a few aspects to it, namely a task or activity that has a few mini-tasks within it. For example: “I was on the jury in the mock trial. Firstly, I had to listen to the evidence, then I retired with the other jurors to the jury room next door. I voted in the election for jury chairman . . .” and so on.

In Section 3(d), a more difficult section, you'll have to describe how you applied *two* skills when carrying out the activity you wrote about in the previous section. Skills can include activities such as organising, analysing, surveying, chairing, campaigning, fundraising, speechmaking – choose the two you can write most about, and make sure they relate back to the activity you wrote about in 3(c).

Section 4: Summary of Information

Here you must give *five* pieces of information you learned about the subject of the action project. Make sure what you write is factual, not an opinion.

For example, if your project was about the law, you might write things such as: “I found out that the Supreme Court is the highest

court in the land; I learned that the District Court is the lowest-level court; I learned there are no juries in the district court . . .”

Section 5: Reflections

Finally, it is time to reflect on the action project. This means thinking back and saying what you thought of it all. The teacher may allow a discussion class to throw up some ideas, but make sure you give your own thoughts, and make sure you give reasons for your reflection.

For example, it might read something like this: “I thought the students didn't take the student council election seriously, because they rushed it and were messing”, or “I thought the whole action project was too rushed, because I didn't get time to complete some activities properly”.

GUIDELINES FOR THE COURSE WORK ASSESSMENT BOOK

The CWAB option is used by very few students each year, so I have given most attention to the Rap.

As you'll see if you use the download link above, the CWAB is similar to the Rap – there is a section where you write up the action project, and the headings are similar to the Rap, though there's less to do in each case (eg you write on only *one* activity, *one* skill and *two* things learned, and the reflection part is broken into smaller sections, which you should find helpful).

To balance this, you have to write about three classes you took part in during your CSPE course, all from a particular module (or section of the course) – eg a Human Rights module, a Care for the Environment module, or a Studying the Law module.

At the start of the CWAB, you need to give the name of the module and tell what this module was about.

Then, the sections you must answer are quite specific:

- ◆ the topic of the class;
- ◆ a short description of what took place in the class;
- ◆ one important thing you learned in the class;
- ◆ something that made the class particularly interesting for you.

Final thoughts

No matter what stage you are at, you can still do well in CSPE. Keep up with the class on the action project work, keep your paperwork in order, keep your eyes and ears open, pay attention in class, and enjoy it.

Kick your study into high gear

At this stage of the year, you should be moving into higher gear in your study of CSPE, especially seeing as you have the mock exams behind you. Maybe everything is under control; maybe you've been concentrating on other subjects; maybe you've let CSPE slide. Whatever the case, you are in control of what happens from now on, so get your CSPE act together.

Study tips

You need to keep up to date with all the important goings-on in social and political life in Ireland and the wider world. So watch the news and read the papers – or read the front page of *The Irish Times*, at least.

Keep a current-affairs diary – brief notes of what's going on in the world. For some items you could add photos with a glue stick – it will help you to remember, and keep in mind that the CSPE exam papers always feature some picture questions.

Keep your CSPE notes from class in good order and in a safe place. If they are stored in the school, ask to bring them home every now and then to revise the content and get the notes into better shape.

Be familiar with the seven concepts of CSPE – Law, Stewardship, Rights and Responsibilities, Human Dignity, Interdependence, Democracy, and Development. Know what the words mean and how they fit in to what you are doing in class.

Use your CSPE textbook and class materials well – make sure you bring them in for every CSPE class. Go through sections of the text that are not being covered in class – what you learn on your own initiative will stick in your mind better.

Don't wait to be spoon-fed. Make your own notes, spider diagrams, etc on the important topics you cover in class and what you come across in the news.

Be on the lookout for special campaigns in the media from groups such as Trócaire, Concern, the Simon Community, Amnesty or Sustainable Energy Ireland. Get familiar with what the campaigns are about, what their goals are, what slogans and images they are using. Those who make up exam papers are probably doing the same and some of these campaigns may appear on the exam papers.



Trócaire used this artist's impression of a dried-up river Liffey in Dublin to highlight the impact of climate change. Photograph: PA