

The expert



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He has been involved in the writing of a number of textbooks for the Educational Company of Ireland. He co-authored *Living History* for the Junior Cert and *The US and the Wider World 1945-1989* for the Leaving Cert.

Stephen works for examsupport.ie recording online revision packs for both Junior and Leaving Cert students. He also contributes internet resources to hist.ie, a website designed to support the new Leaving Cert syllabus.

Get to know the history boys



Irish leader Michael Collins

Study and structure

The exam in June is made up of six questions at higher level and four at ordinary level. The questions total 180 marks on both papers.

Marks needed for different grades (Higher and Ordinary)							
A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	
153-180	126-152	99-125	72-98	45-71	18-24	0-17	

While the material examined will be different, questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 follow the same format for both levels. Questions 5 and 6 are only asked on the higher level paper.

	Question type	Marks (Higher)	Marks (Ordinary)
1	Picture question	15	35
2	Two documents	15	35
3	Short questions	20	60
4	People in history	40	50
5	Source-based question	30	
6	Two attempted from Sections A, B, C and D	60	

HOW TO STUDY

a. Start by revising by topic: Follow the principle of understanding the causes, course and consequences.

b. You must adopt an active approach to studying:

PREVIEW the text. Start with a quick skim of the chapter. Note section headings, key words, and so on.

LOOK for answers to the basic questions of Who? What? Where? Why? When?

READ the chapter with these questions in mind. Use a pen and make brief notes.

TEST yourself on the material that you have studied, eg do past questions from your sample papers.

REVIEW briefly the material on first a weekly and then a monthly basis.

c. Make sure that you familiarise yourself with the paper: Practise as many different types of questions as possible from the sample papers.

d. Try and make your notes useful: Organise notes by year, and then by topic.

Notes should be summaries, and not too detailed.

Write up your notes in your own words, and use examples where relevant.

Use pictures and highlighter pen to give your notes a memorable appearance.

Marking – fact versus myth

It is important that when you prepare for the exam that you do not let unnecessary worries creep in. Let us look at a few myths about the marking of the history exam.

Myth	Fact
I have to write so much in history	Marks are awarded for the quality of your answers, not their length
You have to be good at spelling and grammar	There are absolutely no marks lost for poor spelling or grammar
My presentation is not good	No marks are lost for presentation. It does no harm to make a good presentation though
History is all about dates	There are no marks awarded or lost for dates in your answers. The key is getting events in the right order
The examiner is looking to take away marks	The teachers who correct your paper credit correct material – they are awarding marks to you, not taking them away. You can make a number of mistakes in an answer and still get full marks
The examiner will take away marks if I do extra questions or if I write too much	Nothing could be further from the truth. All questions answered are corrected, and the best ones credited

Reading over questions from past papers can be a great way to see how to get your answers exactly right. Below is a wide-ranging selection of past questions. See how you get on

QUESTION 1 – PICTURES

There will be three parts to this question – usually with one picture in each part

◆ For each part, two questions will be asked on the picture, while a further question will look for background information

◆ Do not be put off by the fact that you may not have seen the image before. Remember to answer every part – students lose marks needlessly here every year.

Popular topics for Question 1 (higher and ordinary level):

- Painting from Renaissance artists*
- Tombs from Ancient Ireland*
- Archaeologist at work*
- Crannogs*
- Round Towers*
- Features of medieval castles*
- Maps*
- Propaganda posters*
- Political cartoons*

QUESTION 2 – DOCUMENTS

There are two documents, with about five short questions on each document

The documents are often from Irish history and the questions are usually very straightforward.

Answers should be brief; use the space allocated on the paper as a guide.

For each document, the last question can be tricky, as it's usually about background knowledge relating to the subject matter of the document. One such example is that for a document on 1916, a question might ask to name two people who signed the Proclamation.

QUESTION 3 – SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

You are expected to answer 10 out of 20 short questions

◆ Keep your answers brief and to the point; often only a word, name or phrase is required. Use the space allocated to each question.

◆ Be careful to read the question carefully: if it asks for two reasons, give two.

◆ This question has become more difficult in recent years.

◆ Attempt as many questions as possible. As long as you get 10 correct, you will get full marks – no matter how many you get wrong.

QUESTION 4 – PEOPLE IN HISTORY

You have to write two accounts – one from Section A and one from Section B.

The person you write about may be a historical figure like a religious

Here is a list of terms or events that students have been asked to explain in Q3. See how many you know

Primary/secondary source	Journeyman	The Blight
Crannog	Serf	Night of the Long Knives
Rath	Friars	The Lateran Pacts
Ogham	Black Death	The March on Rome
Druid	Perspective	Appeasement
Brehon	Vernacular	Blitzkrieg
File	Patron	The Blitz
Souterrain	Nepotism	Operation Barbarossa
Cloister	Simony	Black and Tans
Keep	Indulgences	Solemn League and Covenant
Guild	Caravel	The Emergency
Abbot	Inquisition	The Shannon Scheme
Portcullis	Enclosure	Mother and Child Scheme
Page	Reign of Terror	Gerrymander

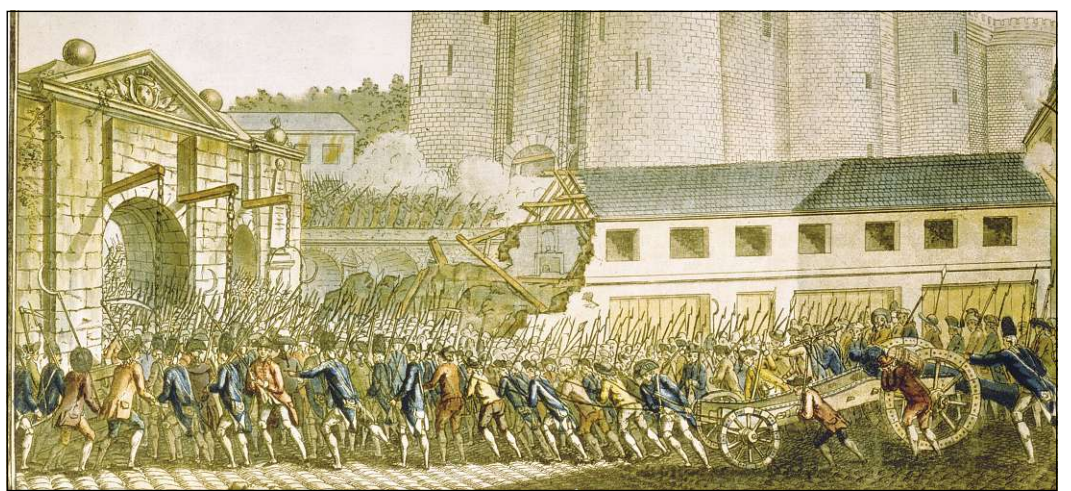
reformer or a person who lived at the time (for example, a supporter of a religious reformer).

Remember that the examiner is looking for historical facts, not a story.

Do not write too much for this question: remember you have a time allocation for each question.

Frequently, students give too much background detail on the life of a personality from history: for George Washington (revolutionary leader), the key detail is his leadership during the US War of Independence.

For a person who was not a historical figure, you do not have to personalise your answer, but you must write it from the perspective of the



Revolutionary times: the storming of the Bastille in France in 1789