



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2005

HISTORY

CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

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1. Ordinary Level

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Junior Certificate History syllabus was examined for the first time in 1992. The Ordinary Level examination is a 90-minute written paper in which candidates are required to answer questions from four sections with a total marks value of 180, as follows:

Section 1: Picture Sources	(35 marks)
Section 2: Document Sources	(35 marks)
Section 3: Short Answer Questions	(60 marks)
Section 4: People in History	(50 marks)

Candidates are required to attempt all four sections. An element of choice is offered in sections 3 and 4.

1.2 PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

A total of 17,527 candidates sat the 2005 examination at Ordinary Level. The following grade breakdown resulted:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG
Numbers	2,035	5,455	5,647	3,850	410	119	11
Percentage	11.6	31.1	32.2	22.0	2.3	0.7	0.1

$$A+B+C = 74.9\%$$

$$D = 22.0\%$$

$$E+F+NG = 3.1\%$$

The grade breakdown of 2005 does not show any significant difference from those of recent years. See Appendix A for grade breakdowns from 2002 to 2005.

1.3 ANALYSIS OF CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE

Reports from examiners suggest that candidates at this level coped comfortably with questions based on pictorial and documentary sources as found in Sections 1 and 2. Basic historical skills, such as observation and comprehension, were being tested here. However, candidates experienced more difficulty with Section 3, which tested general knowledge of the syllabus, and with Section 4, which demanded relatively detailed biographical accounts. This suggests that many candidates have an incomplete or uncertain grasp of historical content and that, lacking that knowledge base and chronological sense, they have not developed the skills required to understand or appreciate history.

Section 1 – PICTURES (35 marks)

Three sources were given with this section:

- A newspaper photograph of an archaeologist working on a site
- Reproductions of two paintings: *Cimabue Maestá* (1285-86) by Cenni di Peppi and *The Alba Madonna* (1511) by Raphael
- A reproduction of an Allied propaganda poster from World War Two.

Each of the three sources is used as a stimulus and a source for the candidate in answering this section. The questions here were often very well answered.

Answers to Question 1(a) showed that many candidates were familiar with the work of the archaeologist. Examiners were particularly impressed by the numbers who were able to correctly identify a method by which archaeologists date objects found on a site.

In Question 1 (b), a minority of candidates gave two valid reasons why Picture B2, and not Picture B1, was the Renaissance painting. Most candidates, however, found no difficulty in identifying another Renaissance artist and a work by that artist.

Question 1 (c) concerned wartime rationing. While part (i) elicited a great many correct answers, many candidates failed to answer parts (ii) and (iii) in a clear and coherent manner.

Section 2 - DOCUMENTS (35 marks)

Two document sources were given with this section:

- Extract from a register of inmates in Kilmainham Gaol during the Famine in 1847
- Extract from Bryan MacMahon's autobiographical book, *The Master*.

Here the candidates were being tested in their ability to locate, interpret and communicate historical information using documentary sources. Examiners noted that the pieces were appropriate to the age and level of the candidates.

The questions here were, in general, very well answered, with the majority of candidates scoring full marks. Questions 2 (a) (vi) and 2 (b) (v) were the exceptions, demanding some historical background knowledge and a level of inference. Also, in question 2 (b) (vii), some candidates wrote about social change in general rather than changes in school life.

Section 3 – SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (60 marks)

Candidates are asked to attempt ten questions from a selection of twenty, ranging across all three sections of the three-year syllabus. Expected answers might vary in length from one or two words to as many as two lines.

Candidates offered a good spread of answers ranging over the twenty questions given, with most answering more questions than the ten required by the rubrics. The most

popular and the most accurately answered questions were those pertaining to Section I of the syllabus.

The least accurately answered questions were as follows:

- (iv) explanation of the *Stone Age*
- (v) constituents of bronze: copper often mentioned, but not tin
- (ix) lack of clarity about the role of the serf on the medieval manor
- (x) very few gave the correct answer, *guild*
- (xi) patron confused with pattern
- (xiv) many named Luther as a reformer, but did not mention one of his teachings
- (xv) some identified a revolutionary leader, but not one of his aims
- (xx) mostly weak with the exception of some good answers on the *holocaust*.

Examiners observed that questions sited in Section III of the syllabus were either unpopular or were poorly answered, suggesting that candidates may have insufficiently studied or revised the twentieth-century components.

This section is designed to test the candidates' general knowledge of the course and offers a generous choice. However, of those candidates who fared poorly overall, many failed to attempt the required number of questions (10 out of 20) and, in such cases, examiners found evidence of apparent guesswork, vagueness, and part-answering of individual questions.

Section 4 – PEOPLE IN HISTORY (50 marks)

This section is divided into **two** parts.

In part A, candidates were asked to write about **one** of the following persons:

- A (i) A person from a named Ancient Civilisation outside of Ireland
- A (ii) A knight in a castle during the Middle Ages
- A (iii) A named explorer who led a voyage of discovery.

In part B, candidates were asked to write about **one** of the following persons:

B (i) A settler who received land during an Irish plantation of the 16th or 17th century

B (ii) A factory-worker or mine-worker in England around 1850

B (iii) A leader of government in Ireland since 1920

OR

An old person talking about social change in Ireland during the twentieth century.

Because this section carries a maximum marks value of 50 out of a total of 180, it is not surprising that a good performance here often makes the difference between an average grade and a high grade. In effect, candidates who answer poorly on this section are unlikely to attain grade B. Examiners noted that the numbers attempting only one part from Section 4 have increased this year.

A (i) This question was not often attempted. When attempted, answers were often vague and general, did not give the name of the ancient civilisation, and included anachronistic material. On the other hand, there were some excellent answers, mostly on ancient Rome.

A (ii) This question was, in general, well answered. Lower-scoring answers confined themselves to simple portrayals of life in the medieval castle, while some higher-scoring answers discussed the young man's progress to knighthood.

A (iii) This question was the most popular in part A. It was almost always well answered, often very well answered. Many candidates supplied detailed, comprehensive accounts of the voyages of Columbus, of Magellan or of Henry the Navigator.

B (i) This question was not frequently attempted. When it was, it was either very well answered or very poorly answered. The best answers contained full accounts of the life of a planter, while others were notable for their lack of historical content.

B (ii) While not as popular as the second option in B (iii), this question was a common choice. As in B (i), there were contrasting answers, some excellent and others extremely disappointing. Some answers were marred by excessive vagueness and it was not unusual for answers to conflate material about factory-workers and mine-workers.

B (iii) Here candidates had a choice of answering on a leader of government in Ireland since 1920 **or** on social change during the twentieth century. The vast majority of candidates offered to write on social change.

Despite its popularity, the responses to the social change option were often disappointing. Vagueness and repetition were rife, as many candidates failed to demonstrate a grasp of the concept of social change and merely gave a static picture of Irish society at some unspecified point in the twentieth century.

The alternative, a leader of government in Ireland since 1920, proved to be the most unpopular and lowest-scoring element in Question 4. Those candidates who chose Seán Lemass were sometimes the exception to this rule.

1.4 CONCLUSIONS

- The vast majority of candidates performed very well in this examination: 11.6% achieved grade A, 63.3% achieved grades B and C, and a further 22% received grade D. Overall 96.9% passed the examination. Typically, these candidates attempted the full quota of questions from the four sections and coped comfortably with the challenge of a fair examination.
- The quality of the answers of some of those candidates who received grade A led the examiners to conclude that many of these might have been better served by attempting the Higher Level paper. At the other extreme, candidates who did not attain grade D standard tended to fail ‘spectacularly’. They showed little or no knowledge of content and demonstrated few or no historical skills. The evidence suggests that these candidates did not have the ability and/or motivation to cope with Junior Certificate Ordinary Level History.
- Typically, low-scoring candidates attempted little beyond Sections 1 and 2 and tended to rely heavily on material from Sections I and II of the syllabus. This suggests that they may have been unable to cope with the more abstract material and the volume of content encountered in the final year. Little has changed in this regard since the examining authority last published its report on this subject for the Junior Certificate examination of 2001. The most significant addition to the points made by the examiners in that year has been the observation that standards of literacy, in particular the ability to write in coherent, continuous prose, have declined.

1.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Candidates should attempt all the required questions. Questions 1, 2 and 3 should be answered on the spaces provided on the examination paper, while Question 4 should be answered in a separate answer-book provided. Both parts, A and B, of Question 4 should be attempted. Often, candidates who failed to achieve grade D were those who made little or no attempt at Question 4.
- In Question 1, it should be noted that answers to the questions are not necessarily always to be found within the picture, but by reference to the historical context from which it comes.
- In Question 2, the document extracts are intended as sources to allow candidates to demonstrate simple document-handling skills. As well as locating items of fact/opinion directly from the extract, candidates may be asked to offer their own opinion or an interpretation derived from the text. Direct quotation from the sources is a poor substitute for one's own words in such cases. Questions 2 (a) (iv) and 2 (b) (v) are good examples of this.
- In answering Question 4, candidates are reminded that they should write accurate historical material in relation to the person chosen and that this should be set in an accurate historical context. Both parts of Question 4 should be attempted.
- Candidates should understand that the concept of change should be intrinsic to their study of, and answering on, the social history of Ireland in the twentieth century. For example, a bare list of developments is no substitute for explaining how particular developments affected the lives of people. Answers which do not reflect this, i.e., the “before and after” of social change, attract lower marks.

- With 42.7% of candidates achieving grades A and B, this suggests a need for more careful consideration and consultation between candidates and their teachers in the matter of the choice of level, Ordinary or Higher, in which to present.
- Teachers preparing candidates for this examination are advised to pay particular attention to the issues of chronology and historical context. Candidates who have a good grasp of these develop a liking for, and a confidence in, the subject. Such eagerness and engagement contribute positively to the teacher-learner relationship.

1.6 FREAGAIRT TRÍ GHAEILGE

Níor thug ach 240 iarrthóir (1.37% den iomlán) faoi scrúdú an ghnáthleibhéil sa stair trí mheán na Gaeilge i mbliana. Bhí céatadán níos mó acu a bhain amach grád A (17%) ná mar a bhí ag lucht an Bhéarla (11.6%). Seachas sin, níor airigh na scrúdaitheoirí aon difríocht shuntasach idir chaighdeán freagraí na n-iarrthóirí seo agus chaighdeán lucht an Bhéarla. Féach Aguisín B.

2. Higher Level

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The Junior Certificate History syllabus was examined for the first time in 1992. The Higher Level examination is a 150-minute written paper in which candidates are required to answer questions from six sections with a total marks value of 180 as follows:

Section 1: Picture Sources	(15 marks)
Section 2: Document Sources	(15 marks)
Section 3: Short Answer Questions	(20 marks)
Section 4: People in History	(40 marks)
Section 5: Stimulus-based Question	(30 marks)
Section 6: Theme-based Questions	(60 marks)

Candidates are required to attempt all six sections. An element of choice is offered in sections 3, 4, 5 and 6.

2.2 PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

A total of 33,340 candidates sat the 2005 examination. The following grade breakdown resulted:

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG
Number	5,476	9,655	9,530	6,484	1,841	331	23
Percentage	16.4	29.0	28.6	19.4	5.5	1.0	0.1

A+B+C = 74.0%

D = 19.4%

E+F+NG = 6.6%

See Appendix A for grade breakdowns from 2002 to 2005.

While the percentage of candidates receiving an A grade this year is 1.8% lower than in 2004, the E/F/NG rates are only marginally higher. The overall standard of answering was very good and the grades awarded are a reasonable reflection of the ability and knowledge of the candidates.

Examiners noted that a small number of centres accounted for a disproportionate number of the E, F and NGs. This, together with clustering of A grades at Ordinary Level, indicates that, in some cases, whole class groups are being entered for the wrong level.

2.3 ANALYSIS OF CANDIDATE PERFORMANCE

Section 1 – PICTURES (15 marks)

Three sources were given with this section:

- A cartoon from the *Dublin Opinion* magazine
- A Nazi propaganda poster
- A stained glass window in Derry's Guildhall

Overall, candidates performed well here, although it was noted that very few scored full marks on this Section this year. While Question 1 (b) (ii) was generally well answered, responses to Question 1 (a) showed that many candidates were not familiar with the wartime rationing official known as the glimmer man. Some candidates also found difficulty with Question 1 (c) (iii).

Section 2 – DOCUMENTS (15 marks)

Two document sources were given with this section:

- Extract describing poor living conditions in Dublin tenements c.1913
- Extract describing a blacksmith at work in his forge c.1950

The questions on Document 1 were very well answered and many candidates scored full marks. However, in answer to Question 2 (a) (iii), some candidates mentioned only one problem caused by alcohol. The question had asked about “problems”, so the examiners expected more than one.

Candidates also did well in Document 2 though fewer of them got full marks. Many examiners commented on the number of candidates who seemed to have been totally unfamiliar with the concept of a forge. Given the importance of the horse and the

blacksmith to transport, agriculture and the social fabric of the country, this gap in the candidates' knowledge is surprising.

Overall, candidates performed best on this section of the paper.

Section 3 – SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (20 marks)

Candidates are asked to attempt ten from twenty short questions which test their general knowledge of content across the syllabus. In the past, many candidates answered most, if not all, of the twenty questions. This did not happen this year. Twelve to fourteen questions at most were attempted and many candidates avoided questions (xiv) to (xx), which addressed Section III of the syllabus. All of the most popular questions were taken from Sections I and II of the syllabus.

Often candidates gave one element of an answer, where the question clearly asked for two elements. This had the effect of depressing the average mark and the numbers achieving full marks for this section.

Questions (i), (ii), (iv), (v), (vi), (vii), (viii), (ix), (x), (xi) and (xiii) were the most popular questions and were generally well answered. However, not all candidates were able to provide both the required definition and example in Question (i). Some who answered Question (ii) were unable to correctly name two types of tomb from Neolithic Ireland. An Italian painter was sometimes given as the answer to Question (viii).

Section 4 – PEOPLE IN HISTORY (40 marks)

This section is divided into two parts:

In part A, candidates were asked to write about **one** of the following persons:

- A (i) A person in ancient Ireland
- A (ii) A monk in an early Irish monastery
- A (iii) A knight living in a medieval castle.

In part B, candidates were asked to write about **one** of the following persons:

B (i) A **named** leader involved in a revolution (America, France or Ireland) during the period, 1770-1815

B (ii) A factory / mine owner during the Industrial Revolution in Britain c.1850

B (iii) A **named** leader involved in the struggle for Irish independence, 1916-1923

OR

A person living in Northern Ireland during World War Two, 1939-1945.

The following chart shows the level of popularity of the different topics in this section and the average mark gained by the candidates:

Topic	Percentage answering each	Average mark out of 20
A (i)	16.6	13.7
A (ii)	46.1	13.1
A (iii)	37.3	14.8
B (i)	35.9	14.5
B (ii)	42.8	13.2
B (iii) (a)	12.6	11.3
B (iii) (b)	8.7	8.6

Answers to A (i) were often of a general nature and not confined to any particular period in ancient Ireland. A (ii) and B (ii) were the most popular topics but they did not score highest. In A (ii), the early Irish and medieval monasteries were sometimes confused.

Examiners noted that many candidates who answered B (ii) were more familiar with the factory/mine worker than they were with the factory/mine owner. A (iii) was generally well answered as was B (i). George Washington was the most popular choice as a revolutionary leader, followed by Robespierre and then Wolfe Tone.

Éamon de Valera and Michael Collins were the most popular leaders in B (iii) but candidates frequently ignored the date parameters and dealt at length with pre-1916 and post-1923 developments. B (iii) (b) was the least popular question in this section and very few candidates managed to answer it well.

Section 5 – THE AGE OF EXPLORATION (30 marks)

This stimulus-driven section contained two document sources:

- A letter from the explorer, Amerigo Vespucci to his patron
- An extract from *The Principal Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation, 1589-1600*

The questions on both documents were very straightforward, posing little difficulty for the vast majority of candidates. While part C was more challenging, many candidates wrote excellent answers on the ‘impact’ or ‘benefits’ of exploration. Part C (c) was rarely attempted and tended to elicit poor responses.

Section 6 – THEME-BASED QUESTIONS (60 marks)

Candidates are expected to attempt **two** of the four parts:

- A. THE RENAISSANCE
- B. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRELAND
- C. SOCIAL CHANGE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRELAND
- D. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The following chart shows the level of popularity of the different parts of this section and the average mark gained by the candidates:

Question	Percentage answering each	Average mark out of 30
A	59.5	16.6
B	31.5	18.7
C	57.1	14.8
D	53.8	19.4

A. THE RENAISSANCE

This was the most popular question. The standard of answering was uneven, however. This was most apparent in part (iii). Those who selected ‘Science/Medicine’ or ‘Printing’ generally did well, though a small number wrote on ‘Painting’ instead of ‘Printing’. Answers on ‘Literature’ tended to be confined to Shakespeare and the focus was often on biography rather than on works. ‘Architecture’ was poorly answered with many writing confused descriptions of Romanesque and Gothic architectural styles.

B. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRELAND

This was the least popular question in this section but many of those who attempted it did very well. Most candidates were able to explain ‘The Blueshirts’, ‘Internment’ and ‘Rationing’ in part (ii). Some very good accounts of ‘The Economic War’ and ‘The Mother and Child Scheme’ were written in part (iii). Candidates had insufficient information to deal adequately with ‘The Shannon Scheme’, however, and accounts of ‘John Hume’ and ‘Ian Paisley’ tended to be based on general knowledge rather than historical study.

C. SOCIAL CHANGE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRELAND

Judging by the unfocussed and poorly-structured nature of many of the answers, it appears that many candidates approached this question without the benefit of comprehensive classroom preparation. This is reflected in the fact that the answers to this topic earned the lowest average mark in Section 6.

On the other hand, candidates who are properly prepared tend to do very well in this question and it is particularly suited to weaker students who have difficulty with political history. Candidates, who apparently had been taught how to systematically answer social change questions, were those who performed the best.

In all three sections, the questions were concerned exclusively with the post-1945 period. Some candidates performed poorly because of their failure to confine their answers to that period. A very common mistake in part (i) was to mention 'gaining the right to vote' as a change in the lives of women.

D. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

This question was generally well answered. However, many candidates correctly identified just one country in part (iii) and there were some common mistakes in part (iv). For example, some wrote exclusively on the 'Battle of Britain' with little or no reference to 'The Blitz'. Some accounts of 'The Holocaust' contained little more than background information.

Topic 1, 'The Rise of the Superpowers', was by far the most popular of the three options in part (v), being attempted by 88% of the candidates who did this question. 7% chose Topic 2, 'Moves towards European Unity', while Topic 3, 'African and Asian Nationalism', attracted a mere 5%.

2.4 CONCLUSIONS

- The Higher Level History syllabus is long and wide-ranging and is being taught in two or three class periods per week. This places demands on both candidates and teachers, especially in Year 3. Despite these, the overall performance of candidates in this examination indicates a very high level of knowledge and skills and is a tribute to both the candidates and their teachers.
- The percentage of the candidates who failed to reach a D grade was inflated by the clustering of E, F and NGs. Clearly, whole class groups had been entered for what proved to be the inappropriate level.
- Sections 2 and 5, the two document-based questions, were answered particularly well.
- Candidates who attempted Section 4 A (i) were expected to locate the person in a specific historical period i.e. Stone Age or Bronze Age or Iron Age etc. Some failed to do so.
- The confusing of the early Irish and medieval monasteries in Section 4 is a perennial problem and occurred again this year.
- Some candidates wrote at length on pre-1916 and/or post-1923 in Section 4 B (iii), even though the date parameters were clearly stated.
- Candidates, who appeared not to have been taught how to approach social change questions, performed poorly in Question 6 C.

2.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need for more careful consideration and consultation between candidates and their teachers in the matter of the choice of level.
- It is important to read the examination questions carefully and to answer the specific questions asked.
- The early Irish monastery often features on the examination paper and candidates invariably confuse it with the medieval equivalent. Class time would be very profitably spent in clarifying this topic.
- When asked to write about a **named** person in Section 4, a candidate must first identify a particular individual and then write about his/her historical importance. If one is not asked to name a person, then the question requires the candidate to place that imaginary person in the correct historical context and describe his/her life.
- When writing about historical figures, the focus of the answer must always be on their career, works, achievements etc. rather than on their biographical details.
- In questions on social change, examiners award marks only for clearly stated 'changes'. Candidates are expected to spell out the changes that have occurred, showing 'the before and after' of these changes and how the changes affected people's lives.

2.6 FREAGAIRT TRÍ GHAEILGE

Níor thug ach 907 iarrthóir (2.72% den iomlán) faoi scrúdú an ardleibhéil sa stair trí mheán na Gaeilge i mbliana. Bhí ceathrar scrúdaitheoirí ag plé le scrípteanna trí Ghaeilge, iad go léir freagrach do Scrúdaitheoir Comhairleach amháin. Cé go bhfuil céatadán an-ard acu ag gnothú grád A (28%), tá ardu nach beag tagtha ar an líon nár shroich grád D (8.6%). Féach Aguisín B.

APPENDIX A: Results 2002-2005

Percentage grade breakdown for Junior Certificate Higher Level, 2002-2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG
2002	20.3	25.7	24.6	18.9	7.5	2.7	0.2
2003	13.7	29.2	30.2	19.6	5.9	1.4	0.1
2004	18.2	28.2	28.2	19.0	5.4	0.9	0
2005	16.4	29.0	28.6	19.4	5.5	1.0	0.1

Percentage grade breakdown for Junior Certificate Ordinary Level, 2002-2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG
2002	15.2	29.6	28.6	21.8	3.5	1.1	0.1
2003	15.5	33.0	32.0	16.1	2.8	0.6	0.1
2004	10.8	30.1	35.8	19.6	2.8	0.8	0.1
2005	11.6	31.1	32.2	22.0	2.3	0.7	0.1

APPENDIX B: Freagairt trí Ghaeilge

Freagairt trí Ghaeilge: torthaí bainte amach san Ardleibhéal, 2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG
Líon	254	234	198	143	63	15	0
Céatadán	28.0	25.8	21.8	15.8	6.9	1.7	0

Freagairt trí Ghaeilge: torthaí bainte amach sa Ghnáthleibhéal, 2005

	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG
Líon	41	61	75	54	7	2	0
Céatadán	17.0	25.5	31.3	22.5	2.9	0.8	0