



## **STAIR HISTORY**

**SCRÚDÚ AN TEASTAIS SHÓISEARAIGH, 2001  
JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION, 2001**

**GNÁTHLEIBHÉAL AGUS ARDLEIBHÉAL  
ORDINARY LEVEL AND HIGHER LEVEL**

**TUARASCÁIL AN PHRÍOMHSCRÚDAITHEORA  
CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT**

**Junior Certificate History; Ordinary Level; 2001**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Junior Certificate History 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)

## 2. PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

A total of 17,059 sat the 2001 examination. The following grade breakdown resulted:

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>NG</b>
Number	2234	5568	5277	3151	622	188	19
Percentage	13.1	32.6	30.9	18.5	3.6	1.1	0.1

A+B+C = 76.6%

D = 18.5%

E+F+NG = 4.8%

The grade breakdown of 2001 does not show any significant difference from those of recent years. See **Appendix A** for grade breakdowns for the years 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001.

## 3. ANALYSIS OF PAPER

Reports from examiners suggest that students 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 Sections 3 and 4, which tested

their general knowledge of the syllabus and demanded relatively detailed biographical

accounts. This suggests that many candidates have a rather patchy and uncertain grasp of historical content and that, lacking that knowledge base, they have not developed the skills required to write a sustained passage of historical material.

### Section 1 – PICTURES (35 marks)

Three pictures were given with this section:

- An artist's impression of a farming settlement in Ireland during the Bronze Age
- A photograph of the Ardagh Chalice
- A reproduction of the painting, "The Arnolfini Marriage", by Van Eyck.

Each of the three pictures is used as a stimulus and a source for the student in answering this section. The questions here were very well answered. In many cases, candidates scored full marks. However, in Question 1 (b) (i), many candidates were unable to say for what purpose the Ardagh Chalice was used. Also, in Question 1 (b) (iv), many candidates were unable to identify the period of origin of the chalice.

### Section 2 - DOCUMENTS (35 marks)

Two document sources were given with this section:

- Extract from an interview about tenement dwellers in Dublin in the early 1900s
- *Irish Independent* report on the death of Michael Collins.

Here the candidates were being tested in their ability to locate, interpret and communicate historical information using documentary sources.

The questions here were, in general, very well answered, with the majority of candidates scoring full marks. However, in Question 2 (a) (vi), some candidates failed to grasp the

meaning of the phrase, “type of person”. Also, in Question 2 (b) (iv), “How did Collins behave during the ambush?”, many answers were received which suggested that the candidates had an incomplete understanding of what constituted “behaviour” in this context.

### 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. The most popular and the most accurately answered questions were those pertaining to Section 1 of the syllabus.

The least accurately answered questions were as follows:

- (x) Few candidates were able to give the name of a Renaissance writer
- (xii) While candidates were usually accurate in naming a reformer, many were unable to mention one of his teachings
- (xiii) While candidates were usually accurate in naming a plantation, many were unable to name the ruler who carried out the plantation
- (xiv) While candidates were usually accurate in naming a plantation, many were unable to state a result of that plantation

- (xviii) and (xix) These questions related to a Topic from Section 3 of the syllabus entitled *International Relations in the Twentieth Century*. Ordinary Level students are required to study **one** of four options from this Topic:
  - ❑ Peace and War in Europe, 1920-1945
  - ❑ The rise of the Superpowers, 1945-present
  - ❑ Moves towards European unity, 1945-present
  - ❑ African and Asian nationalism, 1945-present

Candidates could seldom identify a leader of a country or name a major event associated with this Topic. This leads examiners to conclude that candidates may have been insufficiently advised as to what is included or excluded under this syllabus heading.

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 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 monk in a monastery during the Middle Ages
- A (iii) A lord in a medieval castle.

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

- B (i) A named explorer who led a voyage of discovery

B (ii) A named revolutionary leader in America or France or Ireland during the Age of Revolutions, 1770-1815

B (iii) A person describing political events that occurred in Ireland after 1945 **or** An old person talking about changes that have taken place in transport and communications 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.

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 on the ancient civilisations of Egypt, Greece and Rome.

A (ii) This question was, in general, poorly answered. Many candidates mistakenly wrote about a monk in a monastery in early Christian Ireland. In many instances the candidates wrote very general material not specifically relevant to the Middle Ages.

A (iii) This question was not always well answered. This was mainly due to an absence of historical content. There were a relatively small number of excellent answers, set firmly in the correct medieval context.

B (i) This question was both extremely popular and very well answered. The majority chose Christopher Columbus, with Ferdinand Magellan next in popularity.

B (ii) While not as popular as B (i), this question was also a common choice. Some excellent answers were given on George Washington and on Theobald Wolfe Tone. A revolutionary leader from France was rarely offered.

B (iii) Here candidates had a choice of answering on political events in Ireland after 1945 **or** on transport and communications in Ireland during the twentieth century. The vast majority of candidates offered to write on transport and communications.

The quality of answers was patchy in both cases. However, the variation in quality among the answers on transport and communication was most marked. Many excellent answers chronicled the changes that took place in these areas of social history. However, many candidates failed to demonstrate a grasp of the concept of social change and merely gave a static picture of transport and communication at a particular point in the twentieth century.

#### **4. OVERALL COMMENTARY**

The vast majority of candidates performed very well in this examination: 13.1% achieved grade A, 63.5% achieved grades B and C, and a further 18.5% received grade D. Overall 95.1% 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 attempting the Higher Level paper. At the other extreme, candidates who did not attain grade D standard tended to attain very low marks. They showed little or no knowledge of content and demonstrated few or no historical skills. The evidence suggests that these candidates did not demonstrate 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 1 and 2 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.

#### **4. 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. 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 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 in the extract, candidates may be asked to offer their own opinion/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) (vi) and 2 (b) (iv) and (vi) 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.

Candidates should bear in mind 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, are awarded lower marks.

With 45% of candidates achieving grades A and B, this suggests a need for more careful consideration and consultation between candidates and their teachers on the matter of the choice of level, Ordinary or Higher, which candidates would make.

Teachers preparing students 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.

## **6. FREAGAIRT TRÍ GHAEILGE**

Ní thugann ach céatadán an-bheag (1.47%) faoi scrúdú an ghnáthleibhéil sa stair trí mheán na Gaeilge. Níor airigh na scrúdaitheoirí aon difríocht shuntasach idir chaighdeán freagraí na n-iarrthóirí seo agus caighdeán lucht an Bhéarla.

### **Junior Certificate History; Higher Level; 2001**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Junior Certificate History 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)

## 2. PERFORMANCE OF CANDIDATES

A total of 37,206 sat the 2001 examination. The following grade breakdown resulted:

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>NG</b>
Number	5,184	9,807	10,871	8,193	2,508	604	39
Percentage	13.9	26.4	29.2	22.0	6.7	1.6	0.1

A+B+C = 69.5%

D = 22.0%

E+F+NG = 8.4%

The most notable difference between the above statistics and those of year 2000 were a lower percentage of A grades and a higher failure rate. See **Appendix A** for grade breakdowns for the years 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001.

The examination paper was welcomed by many commentators for its clarity, its content coverage and its appropriateness to the age and ability of the cohort. However,

examiners' reports, particularly from advising examiners, indicate that the examination presented some unforeseen challenges which may have made it difficult for the more able candidates to achieve grade A and, consequently, for the less able candidates to achieve grade D. Some of these issues will be adverted to in the section-by-section commentary below.

It emerged from the reports that there were many clusters of candidates who failed to reach grade D standard. In some examination centers, a majority of

candidates failed, indicating that whole class groups who should have taken Ordinary Level were entered instead for Higher Level.

### 3. ANALYSIS OF PAPER

#### Section 1 – PICTURES (15 marks)

Five pictures were given with this section:

- A high cross **and** a round tower from early Christian Ireland
- A detail from Raphael's painting "The School of Athens"
- Election posters for Fianna Fáil **and** Cumann na nGaedheal in the 1932 election.

Overall, candidates performed well here, although it was noted that very few scored full marks on this Section this year. In Question 1 (a) (ii), virtually every student answered correctly, but in Question 1 (a) (iii), many failed to identify accurately the site of either a high cross or a round tower. In Question 1 (b) (ii), Italian and even modern painters were frequently cited.

The two most commonly noted errors in part (c) were that Fine Gael was often named as a party which contested the 1932 general election and that, while many identified de Valera as the Fianna Fáil leader, few could name the leader of Cumann na nGaedheal.

#### Section 2 – DOCUMENTS (15 marks)

Two document sources were given with this section:

- Extract from the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, Easter, 1916

- Extracts from the *Irish News* and the *Newsletter* regarding the introduction of Direct Rule in Northern Ireland in 1972.

Candidates also performed well on this Section, with no particular pattern of error discernible to the examiners. However, it was noted that a significant number of candidates, answering Question 2 (a) (vi), named Michael Collins or Eamon de Valera as leaders executed for their part in the 1916 Rising. Also, very few candidates, answering Question 2 (b) (v), showed a clear understanding of why the British government introduced Direct Rule in Northern Ireland in 1972.

### Section 3 – SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS (20 marks)

This section was handled very well by most candidates. Questions (i), (ii), (viii), (x), (xii) and (xiii) were particularly well answered. Virtually nobody attempted question (iv) and questions (v), (vii), (xiv), (xv) and (xviii) were often poorly done. In question (vii), the modern meanings of *curfew* and *toll* were often given instead of their correct medieval context. In question (xviii), Poland and Germany were commonly cited as countries which lost land as a result of the Munich Agreement, 1938.

### 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) An archaeologist working on a dig
- A (ii) A monk in a medieval monastery
- A (iii) A native of a land discovered by Europeans during the Age of Discovery.

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

- B (i) A government supporter describes the outbreak of revolution in America or France or Ireland, 1770-1815

B (ii) A Republican during the Irish War of Independence, 1919-1921

B (iii) A Nazi describes Hitler's coming to power in Germany.

A (i) was often extremely well answered. Also B (ii), while not a popular choice, was typically answered to a very high standard.

Those who attempted B (i) mostly wrote about America or France. Revolution in Ireland was rarely done.

The most common error found in the answering of this section was to be found in A (iii) and B (iii). In A (iii), very many candidates wrote about the life and career of Christopher Columbus instead of a "native of a land discovered by Europeans". In B (iii), detailed accounts of Hitler's foreign policy were sometimes offered instead of accounts of his coming to power.

This tendency not to address the question on its own terms must be a matter of some concern to teachers. Candidates' failure to present their account from the perspective of the named person occurred despite the fact that the person at issue was named clearly at the start of each heading on the examination paper. This may have been because such candidates approached the examination with rote-learned answers and did not adapt their knowledge to the demands of the question.

## Section 5 – PLANTATIONS IN IRELAND (30 marks)

In general, this question was well answered. However, many candidates had some difficulty with part C. Here, candidates were asked to write about the effects of a chosen Irish plantation under **two** of the following headings: political control; culture and

customs; religion. Notwithstanding the fact that the headings offered were worded exactly as in the syllabus, it seemed that even the more able candidates found this challenging. It seems likely that, because this Section (worth 16 marks out of 180) was compulsory, poor performances here may have depressed the numbers achieving grade A and increased the failure rate.

## Section 6 – MULTI-PART QUESTIONS (60 marks)

### A. FROM FARM TO FACTORY: SOCIAL CHANGE IN EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

Candidates showed a good knowledge of the Agrarian Revolution in answers to (i) and (iii) (a), and of living conditions in the industrial towns in answers to (iii) (c). However, very few correctly identified three of the contributors to the Industrial Revolution in answers to (ii). Answers to (iii) (b) were also somewhat disappointing.

### B. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRELAND

Examiners noted that answers to this option were generally better than they have been in recent years. Candidates showed a good overall grasp of political developments.

### C. SOCIAL CHANGE IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY IRELAND

Typically, this question was answered competently by most candidates. However, two issues of possible concern were identified by the examiners.

In part (iii) a significant number wrote about 'transport' instead of 'communication'. This confusion has arisen previously, so it may be helpful to state plainly here that examiners interpret 'transport' as being the movement of

people or goods, while ‘communication’ is taken to mean the transmission of messages, images and ideas.

The other issue, which is particular to this year, was that each of the four parts of the question related to the period since 1945. Many candidates offered accounts of developments from the first half of the twentieth century, or indeed from even earlier periods, for which no marks accrued.

A pattern has emerged over recent years of poor answering on social change in twentieth-century Ireland. Advising Examiners believe that many candidates continue to be ill-prepared for this type of question, choosing to merely list several developments instead of developing a dynamic picture of the “before and after” of change. This year’s candidates, however, have fared slightly better in this regard.

#### D. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Parts (i), (ii) and (iii) (a) were well answered. Three topics were offered at (iv), reflecting the options available in the syllabus.

In Topic 1, *The Rise of the Superpowers*, many students failed to address part (b) as it was asked. They described the Cuban Missile Crisis or the Berlin Airlift in detail, but neglected to treat of the “effects on relations between the USA and the USSR”.

Only a small percentage of those who answered Question 6 D wrote about Topic 2, *Moves towards European Unity*. Fewer still attempted Topic 3, *African and Asian nationalism*.

#### **4. OVERALL COMMENTARY**

The Higher Level syllabus is long and it is being taught in two or three periods per week. This places demands on both students and teachers. The fact that almost 70% attained at least a C grade is a tribute to both. That almost 14% of candidates secured an A grade is very reassuring.

8.4% of candidates failed to achieve a D grade this year. Examiners noted that these candidates often came in clusters, i.e., a small number of examination centres returned a disproportionate amount of E, F and No Grades. This suggests that the decision to enter these candidates for the Higher Level examination may have been misguided and that perhaps school policies and/or teachers' advice might be more circumspect in this matter.

The main areas identified by examiners as those, which proved particularly challenging for candidates, were as follows:

- Questions 4A (iii), 4B (i) and 4B (iii). In all three cases, candidates found difficulty in addressing the question within its own terms (See commentary on Section 4 above)
- Despite the fact that the headings used in Question 5C were those specifically stated in the syllabus, examiners reported that many candidates had difficulty with this
- In answer to Question 6C, candidates should bear in mind 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, are awarded lower marks
- Many candidates failed to address Question 6D 4 (b) within its set terms.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**



Evidence suggests that there is a need for more careful consideration and consultation between candidates and their teachers on the matter of the choice of level, Ordinary or Higher, which candidates would make.

Teachers preparing students 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 contributes positively to the teacher-learner relationship.

Such critical engagement with the subject on the part of teacher and students is clearly desirable. This, however, is not fostered by an over-emphasis on preparation for examinations through rote-learning. The History syllabus, in its aims and objectives, is more than merely a test of memory. It is a rich and rewarding discipline, and students who are also exposed by their teacher to the concepts, skills, and values of the subject will ultimately derive more lasting benefit from their experience.

## **6. FREAGAIRT TRÍ GHAEILGE**

Ní thugann ach céatadán an-bheag (2.38%) faoi scrúdú an ardhleibhéil sa stair trí mheán na Gaeilge. Bhí ceathrar scrúdaitheoirí ag plé le scrípteanna trí Ghaeilge i mbliana, iad go léir freagrach do Scrúdaitheoir Comhairleach amháin. Tá siadsan ar aon dul go bhfuil caighdeán na bhfreagraí i measc na n-iarrthóirí seo ar an iomlán níos airde ná caighdeán lucht an Bhéarla.

## APPENDIX A

### Percentage grade breakdown for Junior Certificate Higher Level, 1998-2001

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>NG</b>
1998	17.4	27.6	27.0	19.4	6.9	1.6	0.1
1999	17.4	26.7	26.5	20.6	7.1	1.7	0.1
2000	20.5	32.8	27.9	14.8	3.3	0.6	0.0
2001	13.9	26.4	29.2	22.0	6.7	1.6	0.1

### Percentage breakdown for Junior Certificate Ordinary Level, 1998-2001

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>NG</b>
1998	19.4	37.5	27.5	12.0	2.6	0.9	0.2
1999	15.2	26.9	27.6	21.6	5.3	2.9	0.4
2000	13.8	31.6	30.0	18.8	4.1	1.5	0.2
2001	13.1	32.6	30.9	18.5	3.6	1.1	0.1

### Freagairt trí Ghaeilge: torthaí bainte amach san Ardleibhéal i mbliana

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>NG</b>
Líon	191	232	225	161	59	13	6
Céadatán	21.5	26.2	25.4	18.2	6.6	1.5	0.1

### Freagairt trí Ghaeilge: torthaí bainte amach sa Ghnáthleibhéal i mbliana

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>NG</b>
Líon	29	81	64	55	14	6	1
Céadatán	11.6	32.4	25.6	22.0	5.6	2.4	0.4