

**Evidence and Enquiry:
Using the 1901 and 1911 census in the Leaving Certificate History classroom
Part one – the research study report.**

Introduction:

Leaving Certificate students have the opportunity to use the 1901 and 1911 census materials for the *research study report*.

The first section contains advice on how to proceed with a research study report using census materials.

The second section contains a number of essays showing how evidence from the census can be used in the presentation of the “historical essay” part of the *research study report* using the 1901 (and other) census materials.

The exemplars are based upon the village of Dunlavin, county Wicklow.

Please note that this material does not include examples of *the outline plan*, *evaluation of sources*, or *review of process*. A student should write these sections so that they are relevant to the specific subject of their *research study report*.

Part one: The Research Study Report

The Leaving Certificate History syllabus allows students to research a subject of their own choice. The *research study report* accounts for a maximum of twenty per cent of the total marks in the examination. It is submitted at the end of April in sixth year.

It allows students to engage in a measure of self-directed learning, and to enquire into a subject of historical significance. The RSR must be the student’s own work, and had to be supervised by the history teacher. Before finalising your subject for the RSR, make sure that you have access to suitable sources. You should not undertake major work until your teacher has approved the outline plan.

The *research study report* has three components: the outline plan, the evaluation of sources, and the extended essay, including a *review of process*.

1. Your Title:

Before starting on the outline plan, decide on your title. This should focus on a small area to assist you in narrowing your investigation; include a date or range of dates.

In consultation with your teacher, choose a title that will help you to identify and select relevant information as you read through your sources.

Example: “Life in the village of Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow, in 1901”.

In dealing with a subject that draws on census material, it is not essential to have the word census in the title. Census records, or books on the census, are sources, and do not have to be mentioned at this stage.

2. The outline plan [15 marks]

Next you should write out an *outline plan* of how you intend to proceed with the RSR. The *outline plan* contains four sections, and you do not need to go into too much detail in this section. The intention of the outline plan is for you to state **briefly** why you picked the subject, what you want to study, how you intend to do it, and to name the sources that you use. All of this material should fit into one page of the official booklet.

2a. *Define and Justify* [3 marks]

This simply means that you state what subject you intend to study, and then give brief historical reasons why it is an important subject to write about.

As census records contain information about families, households, and districts, you can mention the importance of these records for social and economic change in an area, or relating to a family. In addition, the changes at local level can give an indication of important changes taking place at national level.

2b. *Your Aims* [3 marks]

Now, you should write out two or three precise historical aims that you hope to investigate by the time you have finished. Think of these aims as headings that you will refer to as you work through the sources looking for material that is relevant to your RSR. The aims have to be linked with your title.

2c. *Intended approach* [3 marks]

Indicate in this section how you intend to locate material that is specific to your aims, and how you might use or consult the material in achieving the aims. State how you intend to look for material that is relevant, and how you are looking for any differences in interpretation of the material that might emerge from the sources.

If you are looking for material on a family or a household, state that you intend to check census records online to locate the relevant record or records.

You may wish to check www.borrowbooks.ie (a catalogue of all public libraries in Ireland) to see if there are any books or other materials available on your area. Part of your *intended approach* with a census study might be to visit the local library to find out what resources they have that is relevant to your subject.

You may want to look up the digital edition of *The Irish Times* (currently available in most schools or through local libraries) to find out if there are any references to your area in either 1901 or 1911.

You may also intend to look for biographies, or census records, of local or national personalities, once this search is relevant to your aims.

2d. *Your Sources* [6 marks]

Next, you should name your sources. Higher level students need at least three sources, while Ordinary level students a minimum of two.

Where a student wishes to do a study on a census-related topic, the sources can be a combination of the original household forms, published government reports, and some material published by historians on the census, usually on a local area.

Clearly name your sources, so that anyone who reads your RSR could locate them. Number the sources - 1, 2, 3 - so that you can refer to them in a very brief manner in the next section of the RSR

For census material, give the year of the census, the area, and any other identifying information.

If you are using a book, name the author, the title, and its date of publication.

If you are using an article from a local history magazine, name the author, title, name of the journal, and the date of publication.

If you are using an article from a newspaper, give the name of the author (if known), the heading of the article, the name of the newspaper, and the date.

If you are using material from a website, give the name of the author (if known), the title of the website, the web address, and the date you downloaded the information.

3. Evaluation of sources [25 marks]

Prepare for this section as you read through your sources, by noting strengths and weaknesses of each source in relation to the aims put down in your outline plan. If one of your aims stated that you wanted to find out about the education level of a family or a household, was the information you found satisfactory, were there any gaps that you could identify in the sources? Did the sources disagree about any issue, or interpretation, that was relevant to your study?

4a. The extended essay [50 marks]

In the extended essay, you are asked to present a clear and relevant essay that relates to the aims recorded in the outline plan.

The word length should be between 600 and 800 words for Ordinary level students, and 1200 and 1500 words for Higher level students. The word length also includes the *review of process*.

Write a brief introduction for the historical essay. This can include a reference to the importance or impact of your subject.

Each paragraph (or section) should be made relevant to the title, and should address one or all of your aims. When you start a new section, link the new unit back to one of the aims. Try to include a small number of brief, interesting direct quotations made by historians, if you can find any.

In a brief conclusion, introduce a fresh perspective or include a new point of information that will give the reader a good sense of the importance of your study.

Please note that your RSR cannot include any inserts; all information must be **written** into the booklet.

4b. Review of process [10 marks]

In this section, the main purpose is to give an indication of the journey that you made from the time you choose a subject, to writing up the historical essay. Make sure that you relate your comments to the subject mentioned in the title, and the aims that you stated in your outline plan.

Say why you picked the topic. Indicate how you dealt with any difficulties that arose during the research.

How well did you achieve the targets, aims or intentions mentioned in the *outline plan* or did you modify them in any way as you went through all the stages of the RSR?

Did your interpretation or understanding of the subject change as you went through the stages of the RSR? Did your views change as a result of the views expressed in the sources that you consulted? As you progressed through the RSR, how did your understanding of how a historian works develop?

Students will find further information about Leaving Certificate History on www.hist.ie