

# CENSUS IN SCHOOLS

History Lesson Plans

3.1 Examining the changing role  
of women in Ireland

**CENSUS**  
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[www.census.ie](http://www.census.ie)

 An  
Phríomh-Oifig  
Staidrimh Central  
Statistics  
Office

## The Plan

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With a view to exploring the experiences of women in 20th century Ireland, the students will utilise their textbooks and the census resources located at <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/search/> to examine the changing role of women in Irish society. The textbook will lay the foundations for information on the topic while the resources will be used for research and examination. The resources will be displayed on the whiteboard if a computer room is unavailable to the class group. The class can begin with a brief conversation with the class in which students are asked to recall some important women in Irish history. At this point, the teacher can display some resources which highlight the many women involved in the 1916 Rising located at <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-1916/1916irl/cpr/cwr/> . The students could briefly examine the various articles at this page, exploring the women or the teacher can direct the learning by their own choice.

The next phase of the lesson plan is to carry out a question-and-answer segment with the class on the importance of keeping a record for the purpose of history. The following questions will help guide this portion of the class:

- Why is keeping a record important for society?
- What is a census?
- Why is carrying out a census important? What can we learn from them?

Having reminded students of the important use of census information, the teacher can move towards creating a census with the students.

## Creating the ‘Homemade Census’

It would be envisaged that the students could be granted the opportunity to create the census from scratch. This would entail a think-pair-share format to allow all students to examine a census form and choose which questions would be suitable for their own version.

The first task for students to consider is – What are my aims? There should be a list of conclusions to be reached. This list can be varied depending on the teacher’s professional opinion of their student’s ability. However, the student should meet basic criteria such as answers to the following questions:

- What are the main differences found between women in the early 20th century and women in the early 21st century in the areas of i) Work, ii) Education, iii) Religion, iv) Family

These aims should be achievable with help of the online records of the census such as seen in the picture below. These census records should be shown in class by the teacher to students. A range of census forms from different areas is advisable to give a greater overview of the lives of women in Ireland at this time. Searching the records with a local view is best to achieve a better understanding of the changes in the local community i.e. Ballincollig, Bandon, Mallow as town examples. Students will record the findings from a test sample of records.

Surname	Forename	Age	Sex	Relation to head	Religion	Birthplace	Occupation	Literacy	Irish Language	Marital Status
Yelverton	John	51	Male	Head of Family	Roman Catholic	Cork City	Engineer	Read and write	-	Married
Yelverton	Catherine	48	Female	Wife	Roman Catholic	Cork City	-	Cannot read	-	Married
Yelverton	Patrick	18	Male	Son	Roman Catholic	Cork City	Apprentice Booter Maker	Read and write	-	Single
Yelverton	Agnes	16	Female	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Cork City	Scholar	Read and write	-	Single
Yelverton	Margaret	14	Female	Daughter	Roman Catholic	Cork City	Scholar	Read and write	Irish and English	Single
Healy	Mary	26	Female	Boarder	Roman Catholic	Cork City	-	Read and write	-	Married
O'Connell	Bridget	50	Female	Boarder	Roman Catholic	Cork City	-	Cannot read	-	Single

In the second task, the student can then compare the census of 1901/1911 to that of a more modern census created in the class by examining the life of a parent/guardian or relative. With set questions decided on in class, each student could interview a female member of their family as a homework task. It is hoped the family member can provide the student with information concerning their parent/guardian’s life when they were young based on the aims stated above, and also their own lives as adults living in Ireland in 2021.

The third task will then require the student to collect and collate the data and compare this census to those examined in class. This will be a collaborative approach amongst the students and the teacher can plot the findings on the board.

The teacher will then present the student with a modern census form for examination to discuss the nature of the information required and make a conclusion on the changing Irish society (available at: [https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/census2021/Sample\\_Census\\_2022\\_Household\\_Form\\_English.pdf](https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/census2021/Sample_Census_2022_Household_Form_English.pdf))

## The Conclusion

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The aim will be for the student to see the shift in social change in Ireland for women from the early 1900's to the 1960's and then to present day. The aim will also be for the student to make judgements and conclusions as to the reasons for said change in Irish society which will connect with the syllabus.

## Skills Used

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The aim here is to not only get students using their research skills, but also to engage with the guidelines set out in the junior cert syllabus. The following skills can be used in this project:

- Being numerate & literate
- Being creative
- Communicating & comparing research
- Collecting & managing data
- Engaging in oral interviews
- Making judgements & managing myself
- Working with others

## Connecting the project to the Syllabus, Learning Outcomes (SOL) & Strands outlined in the Junior Cycle History Programme

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This project is connected to the junior cert course through a number of chapters.

1. The Work of the Historian
2. The Changing Experiences of Women in 20th Century Ireland
3. 1960's – An important decade in Irish History  
SOL 3: The student creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts.

**SOL 6:** The student appreciates and respects how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which he/she lives.

**SOL 8:** The student values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change.

**SOL 18:** The student observes and evaluates empirical events and processes and draws valid conclusions and deductions.

**SOL 24:** The student uses technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner

## Strand 1: The nature of history

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This unifying strand focuses on the nature of history as a discipline. The strand emphasises the skills, concepts, values and attitudes that inform the learning of history. It helps to form students as historians. There are three interrelated elements to strand 1:

- Developing historical consciousness;
- Working with evidence;
- Acquiring the 'big picture'

## Strands 2 & 3: The History of Ireland and the History of Europe and the Wider World

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Exploring people, culture and ideas. This element relates to the impact of ideas and beliefs about the nature of the human condition, including:

- religious beliefs;
- ideology;
- social;
- economic and cultural ideas