

Wicklow County Archives

Teachers' Guide to the History Research Study Report





Wicklow County Archives,
Wicklow Library,
The Mall, Main Street,
Wicklow,
County Wicklow
A67 X504

Phone: (0404) 67025
Email: archives@wicklowcoco.ie

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INTRODUCTION

This guide is part of a series of documents, developed by Wicklow County Archives to support teachers and students as they undertake their History RSR and to provide an overview of the historical resources and information available from Wicklow County Archives to assist students in delivery their project. These documents are available online and free to download from <https://www.wicklow.ie/Living/Services/Arts-Heritage-Archives/Archives/Collections/Digitised-Collections>

	Format	Content
Teacher's and Student's Guide to the Archives	PDF & Print	A guide to the County Archives and the resources available to help you complete your project
Teacher's Guide to the RSR	PDF	A guide of the processes and requirements for completing the RSR project.
Student's Guide to the RSR	PDF	Step by step guide to how to complete the RSR, with guidance and checklists
How to do Historical Research	Powerpoint	A presentation on how to approach historical research
How to do Historical Research - Student Guide	PDF	Where to find information sources. How to carry out research, record your findings and correctly cite information sources
RSR Worksheets	PDF	A series of worksheets to help students record their findings

The Student's Guide to the RSR and the How to do Historical Research provide detailed guidance on the examination requirements.

This guide is based on NCCA guidance to the RSR

1. THE RESEARCH STUDY

Criteria for choice of subject as set down in the syllabus

- ▲ The subject chosen is to be of historical significance
Failing to explain this can result in lower marks being awarded. The *Student Guide to the RSR* and *How to Research Guide*, which are part of this series of resources, demonstrate how to establish if a topic is *Historically Significant*
- ▲ The subject chosen should not be obscure or trivial. Equally they should not be controversial.
Some teachers choose to avoid certain topics as they can be controversial and difficult to find sources on. Example - conspiracy theories, Dr Mengele, etc.
- ▲ It should be based on information that may be readily authenticated
- ▲ The subject chosen must be clearly defined.
- ▲ Its focus should be narrow rather than broad so as to allow for depth of investigation

Dates and time periods in the title of the RSR help to narrow the focus

- ▲ Sources used should be either primary or specialist secondary
HL students are encouraged to use at least one primary source as part of their research
- ▲ At Ordinary level, a minimum of TWO sources should be used; at Higher level, THREE (or more) sources should be used. A variety of source types should also be used by students.

1.1 Requirements regarding the format of the study as set down in the syllabus

The outline plan: This will

- ▲ Define and justify the proposed subject of study
- ▲ Identify the aims
- ▲ Identify the intended approach
- ▲ Identify the sources to be consulted

The evaluation of the sources: This will

- ▲ Indicate the relevance of the sources to the subject of the study
- ▲ Comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the sources used

The extended essay: This will

- ▲ Set down the main findings and conclusions arrived at by the student
- ▲ Include a review of the process undertaken and how useful that process was in achieving the aims laid down in the outline plan. A more detailed explanation and required approach for these topics is explained in the Students' Guide to the RSR
- ▲ Encourage the use of quotes in the extended essay. Either said by the person being studied, or about the event being studied.
- ▲ Coherence of structure is required: the essay should have a clear introduction and conclusion and, in between, a line of logical development.



1.1.1 Additional pointers from the Guidelines for Teachers

- ▲ In cases where published works by historians are available, at least one such work should be consulted.
- ▲ Standard school textbooks **will not be** regarded as suitable sources.
- ▲ It is imperative that the student does not undertake substantive work on the research study until the teacher has approved the submitted plan. Topics must be considered historically significant, as well as fitting into the time parameters. Ireland before 1992, Europe before 1993.
- ▲ The **fullest possible identification of sources** should be given. Published sources minimum: title, author, publisher. Internet sources: As above + full URL information and pagination details.

Citation of sources is explained in detail in the How to Research Guide, as well as the Student Guide.

1.1.2 The research study: learning outcomes

The following learning outcomes are ones that are of particular significance for the research study.

On completing this part of the syllabus, students at both levels should be able to:

- ▲ Undertake a piece of research in accordance with the appropriate listed skills. These include the ability to locate historical data from a number of sources, to evaluate the data, to collate relevant data and to prepare findings in a well- structured format
- ▲ Display an awareness of objectivity in their own writing by striving to be fair- minded and unbiased
- ▲ Show understanding of the role of evidence in the writing of history. Their understanding should encompass such aspects as : the difference between source and evidence, how the historian evaluates evidence, the fact that evidence may be open to more than one interpretation

In addition to the above, students at Higher level should also be able to:

- ▲ Recognise the provisional nature of historical knowledge – that written histories are an interpretation of available evidence and that new evidence may alter our historical understanding
- ▲ Show understanding of the broader historical context of research findings

1.1.3 Requirements set down by the State Examination Commission (SEC)

Circular S60/05

It should be noted that, in view of the historical periods covered by the syllabus (i.e.: up to and including 1993 in the case of Ireland and up to and including 1992 in the case of Europe and the wider world),

marks will not be awarded in the RSR for historical content more recent than 1993 in the case of Ireland or 1992 in the case of Europe and the wider world.

It is also advised to not complete the RSR on topics from the LC History course. Similarly, if a key personality is being studied, a focused aspect of their life should be the approach for the RSR

1.2 Guidelines for candidates

Teachers and students should note that these may change from year to year and, therefore, should be studied carefully. For example, in recent years a requirement was added that material on the Outline Plan and Evaluation of Sources be written only in the space provided on the appropriate page.

N.B. Chief Examiners Reports for 2011 and 2017 LC History are available on the SEC website. This will include helpful exemplar material.

1.2.1 Choice of subject in accordance with published criteria

Usually, a student will approach a teacher with a subject in mind, prior to the formulation of a precise title. Which of the following subjects, do you think, best fit the published criteria.

- ▲ The Kynoch Munitions Factory in Arklow and WWI
- ▲ Black Sabbath: a history of the band
- ▲ History of the Shillelagh Union Workhouse and Fever Hospital
- ▲ T.K. Whitaker's contribution to the Irish economy
- ▲ Princess Grace's visit to Ireland in 1962
- ▲ Roger Casement's mission to Germany, 1915-1916
- ▲ Wicklow women and the suffragette movement - towards enfranchisement

1.2.2 Formulation of title

The published criteria make two key points about the title: the subject chosen must be *clearly defined*, and its *focus should be narrow* rather than broad so as to allow for depth of investigation. Keeping these points in mind, what observations would you make on the following titles?

- ▲ The assassination of Julius Caesar, 15th March, 44 B.C.
- ▲ An investigation into the characteristics and significance of castles in Colonial America, 1492-1715
- ▲ Robert Barton and the Treaty negotiations
- ▲ 1916 - A Wicklow Great War Perspective
- ▲ Easy Company, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, U.S. Army and their role in the Battle of the Bulge December 1944 to January 1945
- ▲ The Battle of Stalingrad



- ▲ The Emmett Till case: race relations in Mississippi, 1955
- ▲ The burning of Cork, 11th December, 1920
- ▲ Women and the Law, Ireland's first female barrister

1.2.3 The outline plan: satisfying the syllabus requirements and marking indicators

The syllabus requirements relating to the outline plan require that it:

- ▲ Define and justify the proposed subject of study
The 2017 Chief Examiners Report explained how failing to state the historical significance is a common area where marks are lost.
- ▲ Identify the aims
- ▲ Identify the intended approach
- ▲ Identify the sources to be consulted

See the Student's Guide to the RSR and How to Research for more detailed guidance.

1.2.4 Define and justify the proposed subject of study, identifying the aims and intended approach.

- ▲ Does the candidate set out clearly what it is he/she proposes to study and why? Does the candidate set out his/her aims and how he/she hopes to achieve those?
- ▲ Under the three criteria, to what extent does the candidate succeed in doing this clearly and coherently?

The marking indicators are set out below:

Outline Plan Marking Scheme (15 marks)					
Define and Justify + Identify Aims + Intended Approach		Citation of Sources			
		Higher Level		Ordinary Level	
Very good	8-9	Max 6 marks (2 marks x 3 sources)		Max 6 marks (3 marks x 2 sources)	
Good	6-7				
Fair	3-5	Accurate Citation	2	Title	1
Weak	0-2	Author and Title only	1	Author	1
				One further piece of validating info	1

N.B. "Standard school text books will not be regarded as suitable sources for the purposes of the research study." DES/NCCA *Guidelines*, p.14.

CASE STUDIES

Keeping in mind the above syllabus requirements and marking indicators, how well do the outline plans that follow fulfil the requirements and fit the marking indicators?

Title: Crossing the 38th Parallel and the Chinese response: The Korean War June-October 1950

Outline Plan

Define and justify: I intend to investigate why the US crossed the 38th parallel during the Korean War (1950), what influenced their decision to do so, and the fall-out that ensued.

It was a war that caused great embarrassment to the Americans and has often been referred to as the "Forgotten War". Because of an eager and focused Chinese force, and because the US were so unprepared, a 3 week operation quickly became a 3 year military struggle.

Aims: I aim to explore the US reasoning for crossing the 38th Parallel and why they were so confident in victory. I plan to learn why the Chinese intervened and in such large numbers. I want to assess the topic for myself based on what I research, come to my own conclusions and overall develop my skills as a historian.

Intended approach: In researching the topic, I want to have at least 3 different sources so as I can see several perspectives and develop my own analysis. I will use the internet, the library and the book shop to locate information on my chosen topic. I will also consult my teacher, then evaluate my information, write a draft essay, edit it and finally check for balance in my account.

Sources: David Halberstam, "The Coldest Winter", Pan Books, London, 2008
Max Hastings, "The Korean War", Pan Books, London, 2000
<http://www.koreanwar.com/>, Editor: Ed Evanhoe,
Downloaded on 15-01-09 between 4 and 6pm.



Title: Was Francis Tumblety the real Jack the Ripper?

Outline Plan

*The research project I have chosen to study is on the theory of Francis Tumblety as the suspected killer in the “Jack the Ripper” murders, and reasons why he was never caught. I am going to mainly focus on why I believe he was the killer, why he did it and why he was never caught.

*The Jack the Ripper story is significant because within a period of a few short months in 1888, six prostitutes were killed. The murders were of major significance in England at the time, firstly because it cost the lives of six women but secondly it put fear and paranoia into the lives of many people. No one had ever experienced such brutality, he was also the first serial killer known at the end of the 19th century. As well as this, even in our own generation, the Jack the Ripper killings are still of unfortunate influence to many people. Such an example is the copycat ripper of Yorkshire.

*I chose this topic after visiting the London Dungeons museum, where there is a section dedicated to Jack the Ripper. While also taking the Jack the Ripper tour in London, I gained an interest and decided to find out in my opinion what may of [sic] happened.

Everyone has heard of Jack the Ripper but no-one knows who he really is. He is still a mystery man for over one hundred years now and that is what I find so intriguing.

Sources: Philip Snyder, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper*, London, Robinson Ltd. 1995
Mark Whitehead, Miriam Rivett, *Jack the Ripper*, Herts, Pocket Essentials 2006
Jack the Ripper, 5/01/2009, <http://www.casebook.org/suspects/tumblety.html>

2. THE EVALUATION OF THE SOURCES: SATISFYING THE SYLLABUS REQUIREMENTS AND MARKING INDICATORS

The syllabus requirements relating to the evaluation of the sources require that this will:

- ▲ Indicate the relevance of the sources to the subject of the study
- ▲ Comment on the strengths **and** weaknesses of the sources used

The marking indicators and mark allocations relating to the evaluation of the sources are as set out below:

- ▲ Comment on strengths and/or weaknesses of sources and indicate relevance of sources to the subject.
- ▲ To what extent does the candidate succeed in doing this clearly and coherently?

Evaluation of Sources Marking Scheme (25 marks) - Higher Level

Reference to THREE sources		Reference to TWO sources		Reference to ONE source	
Excellent	22-25	Excellent	15-17	Excellent	8-9
Very good	17-21	Very good	12-14	Very good	6-7
Good	13-16	Good	9-11	Good	4-5
Fair	9-12	Fair	6-8	Fair	2-3
Weak	0-8	Weak	0-5	Weak	0-1

Evaluation of Sources Marking Scheme (25 marks) - Ordinary Level

Reference to TWO sources		Reference to ONE source	
Very good	21-25	Very good	14-17
Good	15-20	Good	10-13
Fair	8-14	Fair	5-9
Weak	0-7	Weak	0-4



CASE STUDIES

Keeping in mind the above syllabus requirements and marking indicators, how well do the evaluations of the sources that follow fulfil the requirements and fit the marking indicators?

Title: Crossing the 38th Parallel & the Chinese response: Korean War June-October 1950

Evaluation of the sources

The Coldest Winter: I found this book to be an extremely thorough and comprehensive account of the Korean War. It was my main source of information throughout my research. Halberstam shows an extensive depth of knowledge on not only the course of the war, but also the political minds involved. He gives a great insight into Communist China and Mao at the time unlike the other sources. He deals with the political and military intrigue over crossing the 38th Parallel superbly, which was vital to my project. On the other hand, the book is very long (700 pages), and it was difficult at times to read Halberstam's in-depth style of writing. Also he doesn't use footnotes. Finally, I feel he exposes the American flaws and arrogance to a great extent, and although he's American himself, he is overly critical.

The Korean War: This book bases its information mainly on interviews with war veterans from all sides and thus has a more personal touch to it, which I thoroughly enjoyed. It gave me a great feeling for the bravado and enthusiasm of the US soldiers after crossing the 38th Parallel and the chaos that followed. There are helpful maps and an extensive bibliography including over 400 interviews. One criticism is that Hastings only really deals with the war on the battlefield. Little attention is given to the politics of war or the Chinese set-up and background.

www.koreanwar.com: I used this website at the start of my research to provide me with a brief overview and feel for the Korean War. It gave me a good background knowledge of the war and helped me decide the parameters of my study. It also had useful links to other websites I used. But I found little depth in this source. Everything was merely touched on surface. Also, being an American website, I felt it was slightly biased with little or no mention of the Chinese.

Title: Hugh O'Flaherty and the set up of the Rome Escape Organisation

Sources: Alison Walsh, *Hugh O'Flaherty: His Wartime Adventures* (Cork, 2010)
Brian Fleming, *The Vatican Pimpernel* (Cork, 2008)
Stephen Walker, *Hide and Seek* (London, 2011)

Evaluation:

My sources were relevant to my topic. I found that some of the sources had more relevant information.

I found that Brian Fleming's book was very useful in the way that it had many first hand accounts on it and lots of statements from the people involved in the Rome Escape Organisation. It also gave pictures of all the people involved. I found this book difficult to read but was handy when I used the index to write my report.

Alison Walsh's book was a lot easier to read mainly because it was much shorter and had a lot less sources in it. I found it good but it tended to skim over some details rather than delving deeper into the topics.

Stephen Walker's book was probably the best out of the three books. It was a perfect medium between the other two books. It had plenty of sources and accounts and pictures, and yet it was still easy to read and work with.

Overall, I found that the sources all worked well together in putting together my report on Hugh O'Flaherty and the Rome Escape Organisation.

Title: Kathleen Clarke and the 1916 Rising**Evaluation of the sources**

"Revolutionary Woman" by Kathleen Clarke: Clarke wrote her autobiography in the 1940s, quite a long time after most of the events described. She uses some letters and other records from the period, but relies on her memory for a lot of the details given. She was intimately involved in the events she describes but has very strong opinions (e.g. she sees Eoin MacNeill as a traitor and De Valera as dishonest), so naturally she gives a biased version of events. Even so, this was a very valuable, relevant source for my project.

"No Ordinary Women" by Sinéad McCoole: This is a very well organised and beautifully presented book giving the details of events from 1900-1923, and offering brief biographies of many women. There are colour illustrations on almost every page and these help show how women were affected by their political activities. Kathleen Clarke features strongly in the book, and it is very useful to see her placed in the broad context of events. It was very useful to use the first source in parallel to this one.

www.gonebutnotforgotten.ie: This website was created by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown Co. Council by the historian/archivist Sinéad McCoole. It gives details of a number of women connected with south Co. Dublin who were involved in the Irish independence struggle. There is a page devoted to Kathleen Clarke which gives a brief outline of her life. This was a good starting point for my work, and was bias-free, but overall it was too short to be of huge benefit to my work.

Title: The forgotten role of African-American soldiers in World War 1, 1917-1918

Evaluation of the sources

The Unknown Soldiers: This is a specialist secondary source written on the subject of my study. I found it very useful during my research, especially when it came to identifying the various attitudes directed towards the soldiers. Although the source was well researched and contained an extensive bibliography, I felt that it tried to be too comprehensive and lost much needed details, making it very vague in places. The historians concentrated too much on the racism against black Americans before and after the war rather than their role in the conflict. As a result, I found myself using this source as a means of verifying information rather than as a means of discovering new material.

Eleventh Month [Eleventh Day, Eleventh Hour]: This is a specialist secondary source about Armistice Day and some of the events and combat manoeuvres preceding it. I found the information varied, relevant and absorbing. An extensive bibliography helped further my research. I felt that this source was too narrative as it read like a novel in parts. However, I felt that this was the least biased of all my sources as it dealt with the war for every nationality of soldiers instead of solely concentrating on the role of African- American soldiers.

Buffalo Soldiers: This secondary source is written by an internationally acknowledged expert on US military history. The context is extremely relevant to my study as it deals with African-American soldiers from 1892-1918. This was a very comprehensive and detailed source, especially regarding the battles and manoeuvres that the African- American soldiers were involved in during World War I. However, I did feel that the author did not give an entirely balanced view as there was no mention of any of the soldiers' failings, military or personal. The one failure that was mentioned, the

"September Debacle", was glossed over and I believe it was only referred to as another example of racism by the white Americans.

3. THE EXTENDED ESSAY: SYLLABUS REQUIREMENTS AND MARKING INDICATORS (HL)

For ease of reference, the syllabus requirements relating to the Extended Essay and the marking indicators and mark allocations for the Extended Essay at Leaving Certificate Higher Level, 2011, are set out below. The marking indicators and mark allocations that applied to the marking of the RSR Ordinary Level are given on pages 20-21.

The syllabus requirements are as follows (Syllabus, p.9):

The extended essay: This will set down the main findings and conclusions arrived at by the student. It should include a review of the process undertaken and how useful that process was in achieving the aims laid down in the outline plan. Coherence of structure is required: the essay should have a clear introduction and conclusion, and, in between, a line of logical development. Higher Level Word Count - 1,200 - 1,500 words (including the Review of Process). Ordinary Level Word Count - 600 - 800 words (including the Review of Process).



The following are the marking indicators and mark allocations used in the examination:

Extended Essay Marking Scheme (50 marks)					
Historical Knowledge	25	Research Skills	15	Presentation	10
Thorough, accurate and relevant to the title. Detailed account. Inclusion of facts, figures, statistics, etc. All must be relevant to the title of your RSR.		Such as – a good depth of investigation evident, correctly using sources, fair treatment of issues presented. Use quotes, figures and opinions. Refer to the views of historians as presented in the sources.		Literacy and Structure, Logical Manner, etc. Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation. Neat and legible handwriting.	
Higher Level					
Excellent	21-25	Excellent	13-15	Excellent	9-10
Very good	16-20	Very good	10-12	Very good	7-8
Good	11-15	Good	7-9	Good	5-6
Fair	6-10	Fair	4-6	Fair	3-4
Weak	0-5	Weak	0-3	Weak	0-2
Ordinary Level					
Historical Knowledge	25	Research Skills	15	Presentation	10
Very good	21-25	Excellent	13-15	Very good	8-10
Good	15-20	Very good	10-12	Good	6-7
Fair	8-14	Good	7-9	Fair	4-5
Weak	0-7	Fair Weak	4-6 0-3	Weak	0-3

4. THE REVIEW: SATISFYING THE SYLLABUS REQUIREMENTS AND MARKING INDICATORS

The syllabus requirements relating to the review are set down in the context of the extended essay, in respect of which the syllabus comments: "It should include a review of the process undertaken and how useful that process was in achieving the aims laid down in the outline plan".

Thus, the review should address two key issues:

- ▲ It should review the research process undertaken by the student, describing actualities rather than aspirations as in the outline plan
- ▲ It should offer the student's reflection on the extent to which the process of research helped the student to achieve her/his aims as set down in the outline plan.

The marking indicators and mark allocations relating to the review of the research process are as set out below:

Review of the Research Process Marking Scheme (10 marks)

Can be a stand-alone section or may be integrated into the extended essay.

It should be personal to your project and address specific aspects of your RSR. It should not be generic and vague!

Higher Level		Ordinary Level	
Excellent	9-10	Very good	8-10
Very good	7-8	Good	6-7
Good	5-6	Fair	4-5
Fair	3-4	Weak	0-3
Weak	0-2		



CASE STUDIES

Keeping in mind the above syllabus requirements and marking indicators, how well do the reviews of the research process that follow fulfil the requirements and fit the marking indicators?

Title: Crossing the 38th Parallel & the Chinese response: Korean War June-October 1950

Review: My interest in the Korean War was ignited when I discovered that my grand-uncle Tommy Slattery had fought during the war and won the Bronze Star medal “for heroism in ground combat near Pyongyang, Korea, 4 Nov 1950”, where he twice volunteered and succeeded in silencing enemy machine guns to save his comrades.

Because of this, I had a sense of pride in researching this topic. I would have liked to base my essay around Tommy and other Irishmen involved in the war but I could not find sufficient information. I started my research on the internet and found some extremely interesting websites which provided me with a solid foundation for my study. I also used the internet to buy a book on the topic, “The Coldest Winter”. I obtained my last source,

“The Korean War” from the local County Library. After reading my first book (“The Coldest Winter”), I decided to hone in on the whole area around crossing the 38th Parallel, as I found it highly intriguing. I put the skills of the historian to use in taking relevant notes and appropriate information from both my books. This was quite difficult as both gave detailed accounts with slightly different perspectives. But I benefited greatly from assessing them both and in formulating my own views. In doing my project, I developed an in-depth knowledge of the American political and military mindframe at the time, and learned why the US pushed north over the 38th Parallel in such confidence. I was amazed by the US lack of leadership and organisation, and also the sheer arrogance and obstinacy of the military command. But what I enjoyed most about my study was investigating the reasons for Chinese involvement and their way of thinking. It was a topic I knew nothing about before, and something I would like to look into again in the future.

Title: Erskine Childers and the Howth gun-running

Review: This project helped to develop my research and note-taking skills. I learned how to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information. My local library in Sutton proved to be more useful than the city library. I skim read and noted important quotes and segments so I could refer back to them. I found it rewarding to work independently. I had to edit my essay so the word count was correct. I typed a first draft and amended it and condensed it. I found I had to obtain a great deal of evidence from several reliable sources to gain an objective view of the topic. By the end of the research topic I had a much clearer idea about the work of a historian. If given the opportunity to begin again, I wouldn't do anything differently as I believe that I accomplished all my aims.

Title: The life and times of Josephine Baker, 1906-1975

Review: I had planned to research some aspect of civil rights history, and a girl in my class suggested Josephine Baker as a topic. I looked up Wikipedia to learn the basics, and Baker's story definitely deserved further study. My teacher advised me to find three sources excluding Wikipedia. It was difficult to get three reliable sources on her. The local library had nothing on her, and eventually I bought a book from amazon.co.uk.

There were a number of websites about Baker, and I chose the "official" site because it is linked to her estate and because it gives a reasonable biographical account and direct quotes from J. Baker. I tracked down the documentary, "Chasing a Rainbow", on youtube.com. It is divided into eight 10-minute segments, but I was glad to gain access to it. The hardest part of my research was separating the relevant from the irrelevant facts. There are lots of details about her personal life and showbiz career that I had to leave out because I wanted to link her to important issues such as racism, World War II, and the civil rights campaign. I think she is a very interesting character and I feel I was able to fulfil my aims. I now understand how black Americans were affected by racism, and I admire the way Baker coped with the hardships she faced in life.



This project and publication has
been funded by The Heritage Council

An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council



Wicklow County Archives

Wicklow Library, The Mall, Main Street, Wicklow, County Wicklow A67 X504

Phone: (0404) 67025 Email: archives@wicklowcoco.ie