LEAVING CERT HISTORY PAST PAPERS
ESSAY QUESTIONS

Ireland: Topic 3
The Pursuit of Sovereignty and the Impact of Partition, 1912-1949

Note: The Pursuit of Sovereignty was the topic for the Documents-Based Question (DBQ) in 2014 and 2015.

2025

- What factors contributed to the rise of Sinn Féin and the decline of Home Rule, 1912-1918?
- How effective was Éamon de Valera's leadership during the Treaty negotiations and Civil War (1921-1923) and during World War II (1939-1945)?
- After partition, what attempts were made to promote cultural identity in Ireland, North and South? Refer to one or more of the following: language; religion; education.
- In what ways did World War II affect Northern Ireland?

2024

- Would you agree that Ireland experienced a decade of revolutionary change, 1912-1922? Give reasons for your answer.
- During the years 1920-1945, how well did the government of Northern Ireland deal with social and economic problems and/or threats to security?
- What were the successes and failures of Éamon de Valera in power, 1932-1948?
- What were the main events of the Eucharistic Congress, 1932, and in what ways did the Congress contribute to Irish cultural identity?

2023

- How did one or more of the following contribute to tensions in Ireland: the Home Rule Bill, 1912-1914; World War I; the 1918 election?
- During the period 1920-1945, how well did the government of Northern Ireland respond to the challenges it faced?
- During the period 1923-1945, how skilfully did W.T. Cosgrave and Éamon de Valera handle Anglo-Irish relations?
- What was the impact on Irish life of the 1932 Eucharistic Congress and/or of attempts to promote the Irish language?

2022

- During the period 1912-1920, what factors contributed to the partition of Ireland?
- How did the Unionist party in power respond to the challenges it faced, 1920-1945?
- What was the impact of the Eucharistic Congress, 1932, on Irish life?
- During the period 1923-1945, why did Irish governments find it difficult to achieve economic success?

2021

- Why were both the negotiations and terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, 1921, controversial?
- What were the main events of the Eucharistic Congress, 1932, and how did the Congress contribute to Irish identity?

- What was the impact of World War II on Ireland, North and South?
- What was the contribution of two of the following to Irish life: Patrick Pearse; Evie Hone; James J. McElligott?

2020

- During the period 1912-1921, what attempts were made to obtain self-government for Ireland, and to what extent were they successful?
- During the period 1923-1945, how effectively did Irish governments tackle the social and economic problems they faced?
- What were the successes and failures of Éamon de Valera as a political leader?
- What attempts were made to promote cultural identity in Ireland, North and South? Refer to one or more of the following: language; religion; education.

2019

- What was the military and political significance of one or more of the following: the 1916 Rising; the War of Independence; the Civil War?
- What were the main events of the Eucharistic Congress, 1932, and what was its significance for church and state?
- What was the impact on Northern Ireland of the world economic crisis of the inter-war period and/or World War II?
- How did Anglo-Irish relations develop during the period 1923-1949?

2018

- How did the Sinn Féin movement develop during the period 1912-1923?
- Why were both the negotiations and the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, 1921, controversial?
- During the period 1922-1945, how effective were the governments of both Cosgrave and de Valera in dealing with threats to the security of the state?
- During the period 1922-1949, how successful were attempts to make independent Ireland a Gaelic and Catholic society?

2017

- During the period 1912-1920, which factors contributed most to the partition of Ireland?
- During the period 1922-1939, who achieved more in Anglo-Irish relations, Cosgrave or de Valera? Argue your case, referring to both.
- During the period 1922-1949, how did the 1932 Eucharistic Congress and/or the state's language and education policies contribute to Irish identity?
- What was the impact of World War II on Ireland, North and South?

2016

- What were the main events in Dublin during the 1916 Rising, and was Ireland, in Yeats' phrase, 'changed utterly' as a result?
- Why did the conduct and outcome of the Treaty negotiations, October-December, 1921, prove contentious?
- During the period 1912-1940, what were the strengths and weaknesses of James Craig as a political leader?
- How well did Irish governments cope with the social and economic problems they faced, 1923-1945?

2015

- **[DBQ]** What was the significance of the Eucharistic Congress, 1932?

2014

- **[DBQ]** What was the impact of World War II on the city and people of Belfast?

2013

- What were the fortunes of the Sinn Féin movement during the period 1912-1922?
- During the period 1922-1939, how successful were Irish governments in responding to the economic challenges they faced?
- How did Anglo-Irish relations develop under Éamon de Valera, 1932-1945?
- What was the impact of World War II on Ireland, North and South?

2012

- How did the threat and use of physical force affect Ireland during the period 1912-1923?
- How did the government of Northern Ireland deal with economic problems and/or threats to security, 1920-1945?
- What was the significance of the Eucharistic Congress, 1932?
- How did Anglo-Irish relations develop during the period 1923-1949?

2011

- What did one or more of the following contribute to Irish affairs: Patrick Pearse; Arthur Griffith; Countess Markievicz?
- How did the Irish government contribute to the consolidation of democracy, 1922-1932?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of Éamon de Valera as a political leader?
- What was the impact on Northern Ireland of international developments during the period 1932-1945?

2010

- During the period 1912-1920, what factors contributed to the partition of Ireland?
- Who handled Anglo-Irish relations better, W. T. Cosgrave or Éamon de Valera? Argue your case referring to both.
- To what extent did the 1932 Eucharistic Congress and/or the language and education policies of Irish governments promote Irish cultural identity?
- How did the Unionist Party in power respond to the challenges posed by the existence of a substantial nationalist minority within Northern Ireland?

2009

- Why were the Anglo-Irish Treaty negotiations controversial?
- What were the main social and economic challenges facing Northern Ireland, 1920-1945?
- During the period 1932-1945, which did Éamon de Valera manage better, the economy or Anglo-Irish relations? Argue your case, referring to both.
- What attempts were made to promote cultural identity, North and South, during the period, 1912-1945?

2008

- To what extent was the Anglo-Irish Treaty, 1921, responsible for the Irish Civil War?

- What steps did Irish governments take to consolidate democracy, 1923-1945?
- What was the significance of the Eucharistic Congress, 1932, for the Irish Free State?
- How well did the Unionist Party manage the affairs of Northern Ireland, 1920-1939?

2007

- What were the aims and achievements of Patrick Pearse?
- How did Anglo-Irish relations develop during the period 1923-1949?
- How was cultural identity promoted in Ireland, North and South, between 1920 and 1949?
- Following the experience of war, to what extent was the Belfast of 1945 different from that of 1939?

2006

- From 1912 onwards, what factors contributed to the partition of Ireland, 1920?
- Between 1922 and 1932, what steps did the Cosgrave governments take to establish the Irish Free State on firm foundations?
- How well did Ireland, North and/or South, deal with the social and economic problems presented by World War II?
- To what extent were language, religion and education used to promote Irish cultural identity during the period, 1920-1949?