

To Boards of Management, Principal Teachers and Teaching Staff of Primary and Post-Primary Schools

The 'Decade of Centenaries' all-island history competition for primary and post primary schools

1. The Decade of Centenaries

The decade 2012-2022 is categorised as the 'decade of centenaries' as it marks the centenary of a number of important historical events that occurred in the period 1912-1922, and which formed a vital role in the formation of the Southern and Northern Irish states. These events include the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant; the Home Rule crisis; the 1913 lockout; the formation of the Ulster and Irish Volunteer Forces, the Irish Citizen Army, and Cumann na mBan; the Larne, Donaghadee, Bangor and Howth gun-runnings of 1914; the outbreak of World War 1 and the many events during the war (Gallipoli, the Somme etc); the 1916 rebellion; the formation of the 1st. Dáil; the War of Independence, the Government of Ireland Act, and many more. There are also a number of other events that were not directly related to state formation but that are historically relevant to particular areas of the island of Ireland. These include the 1913 Dublin lock out, the sinkings of the *Titanic* in 1912 and of the *Lusitania* in 1915, and others.

2. The all-island schools history competition

The Department of Education and Skills (DES) in Ireland and the Department of Education (DE) in the North of Ireland are working together to mark the 'decade of centenaries' with an all-island schools history competition.

Students at all levels of primary and post primary schools across the island of Ireland are invited to submit a project that identifies a particular event or person from the decade 1912 – 1922 and examines the impact of that event or person on their local area. A project may focus on any event or personality from the period 1912-1922, or alternatively, it could focus on the impact of the decade as a whole on the local area.

The projects will be assessed by a three person panel that will be chaired by Professor Mary Daly of University College, Dublin. The other members of the panel will comprise representatives from the DES and the DE. The criteria that will be used to assess the history projects are outlined in section 3 below.

The three best history projects in each province will receive prizes. At least one prize in each province will be reserved for primary schools / pupils. This means that there will be twelve winning projects in total. One of these twelve projects will be selected as the overall winner.

Each winning project will receive book tokens in the value of €500/£430. In the event of a class project winning it is expected that the book tokens will assist in the creation of a school history library. The overall winner will receive book tokens in the value of €1,250/£1050 as well as a one year's subscription to *History Ireland*. All winning projects will be published online in their entirety on the Scoilnet website (www.scoilnet.ie). An edited version of the overall winning project, or a selection of extracts from the winning entries, will also be considered for publication in *History Ireland*.

Other projects that are considered by the judging panel to have particular merit may also be recognised, either through publication on the scoilnet website or by other means.

The all-island schools history competition is intended to complement the element of the history curriculum at primary and post primary level that relates to the period 1912-1922. The competition is entirely optional and is not intended to place any additional burden on schools.

3. The history project

Each history project is intended to focus on a particular event or person from the decade 1912-1922 and examine how that event or person impacted on the local area, which could be the immediate locality of the school, the local county, or the province in which the school is located. Students are free to select any event, series of events, or personality that is relevant to the period 1912-1922. Please note that the Irish Civil War, is an eligible topic for the purposes of this competition. Alternatively, instead of selecting a particular event or person, students could assess the importance of the decade as a whole on their local area.

The project can be submitted by a class, a group of students, or an individual student.

The project should be between 1,000 – 2,000 words for projects at primary level (i.e. for projects submitted by a class, group of pupils or an individual pupil), and between 3,000 – 4,000 words at post primary level (i.e. for projects submitted by a class, group of pupils or an individual pupil).

Projects will be judged against the following criteria

- Understanding of the event: the degree to which the significance of the selected event/s or person is/are understood and examined.
- Assessment of the impact on the local area: The extent to which the impact of the selected event/s or person on the local area is/are examined. This could include an examination of the social or cultural impact, including any particular impact on women as appropriate.
- Presentation: the overall presentation of the project should be coherent and accurate with a high standard of literacy. While the incorporation of multimedia resources such as pictures into a project is not compulsory they could enhance the overall presentation of a project. Any resources of this nature that are used are not counted in the word count of the project.
- Research: the extent of research evident in the project. School textbooks may be used as a starting point for the project but they must be supplemented by other sources. Primary documents could also be incorporated into the project where possible in order to enhance the quality of the project. (Due care

should be taken that extensive passages are not copied from textbooks or other sources and inserted wholesale into the history project).

While not essential, a project might benefit from references to other areas of the curriculum that are relevant to the subject matter chosen. For example, references to drama, art, poetry, or literature of the time could be used to enrich a history project.

There is no need for historical referencing of the sources on which the project is based but care should be taken to avoid plagiarism. Each project must include a bibliography at the end that lists the main primary and secondary sources that have been consulted. The bibliography does not form part of the word count.

4. Possible sources for the all-island history project

A variety of sources are available to assist in researching the period 1912-1922. The sources of information listed below will provide a useful starting point for research.

- www.scoilnet.ie: this website is funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and provided through the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST). It provides a number of valuable resources that are intended to support pupils, teachers and parents in approaching the primary and post primary curriculum. There is a dedicated 'Decade of Centenaries' area on the Scoilnet website which includes access to primary sources and multimedia resources. There is also a link to the '*Ireland collection*' of academic journals that are relevant to Ireland. There are also links to other external websites that provide additional online resources.
- www.hist.ie: this website is also funded by the DES and provided through the PDST. It is aimed primarily at post primary students and teachers (as well as parents). It provides a number of online resources relevant to the period 1912-1922, as well as a major resource called *Discovering Women in Irish History*.
- www.nationalarchives.ie: The website of the National Archives in Dublin provides a number of digitised resources relating to the history of modern Ireland. There is also an online exhibition relating to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. The site also allows free access to the 1911 census. It also hosts the witness statements from the *Bureau of Military History* for the period 1912 to 1922.
- www.nli.ie : The website of the National Library of Ireland includes a guide for post primary students on how to use the numerous resources available in the library. There are also online case studies of the 1913 lock out, as well as an online exhibition relating to 1916.
- www.proni.gov.co.uk : The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland offers a range of resources that students may find useful. These include a searchable database of the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant.
- <http://www.cwgc.org/>: the website of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission provides a number of resources on the events of WW1. It also provides a searchable database of soldiers who died while fighting in the British Army.
- http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/events/ulster_covenant : the BBC website provides a number of historical resources relating to the decade. In particular, it provides a very readable account of the Ulster League and Covenant with information on the background and other events happening at the time.
- www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/easterrising/ : This is a special site on the events, personalities, and impact of the 1916 rising, and includes interviews with witnesses and historians.

- [http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/The Pursuit of Sovereignty the Impact of Partition 1912--1949](http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/The_Pursuit_of_Sovereignty_the_Impact_of_Partition_1912--1949) : The University College Cork multi-text project in Irish history provides resources relating to 'The pursuit of sovereignty and the impact of partition, 1912-1949'. This includes material on key personalities, events and developments in the decade 1912-1922.
- <http://www.nmni.com/Home> : the website of the Ulster Museum has a specific section dealing with events in the decade 1912-1922. This includes an excellent selection of images from the period.
- <http://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/> : this is a website supported by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht which provides a range of resources to support study of the period 1912-1922.
- Local public libraries: all public libraries across the island of Ireland provide access to a range of secondary sources that relate to 1912-1922. Each local library has an online catalogue that can be searched for relevant books, including biographies. There are also central facilities for checking the availability of books (www.borrowbooks.ie in Ireland and www.ni-libraries.net in the North of Ireland).

5. Submission of projects and announcement of winners

The deadline for receipt of completed projects is 4 April with the winners being announced, and prizes awarded, before the end of May 2014.

Projects must be submitted online to the following email address: historycompetition@education.gov.ie.

Each project **must include** a cover sheet at the front (a template cover sheet is attached to this letter and is also available to download at www.education.ie/historycompetition) and a bibliography listing the sources consulted.

6. Queries

Any queries on this circular should be directed to Tony Gaynor tony_gaynor@education.gov.ie or Russell Welsh russell.welsh@deni.gov.uk .

7. Circulation

Please bring this letter to the attention of your principal, history teachers and members of the school board of management.

**Department of Education and Skills,
Marlborough Street,
Dublin 1**

**Department of Education
Rathgael House, Balloo Road
Rathgill, Bangor, BT19 7PR**

Template cover sheet which must be included at the front of all projects

Title of project:

Name(s) of class / group of students / individual student submitting the project

School roll number (this should be provided if possible)

School address (this must be provided even for projects submitted by a group of pupils or an individual pupil):

Class teacher's name (this must be provided even for projects submitted by a group of pupils or an individual pupil):

Contact phone number:

Contact email address