

THIRD EDITION

# THE PAST TODAY

Complete Junior Certificate History

Dermot Lucey





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**Dermot Lucey**

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The paper used in this book is made from the wood pulp of managed forests. For every tree felled, at least one tree is planted, thereby renewing natural resources.

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# Introduction

Welcome to the new edition of **The Past Today** – leading a **new student-centred** approach to History. Revised and updated, it reflects the changing focus of assessment strategies with an emphasis on key skills and assessment.

Throughout the text, active learning is promoted, empowering students and promoting the development of their skills.

- Each chapter now starts with **What You Will Learn**, detailing what you can expect to cover within the chapter.
- **Assessing Your Learning** panels allow regular **self-assessment**.
- **Key Terms** boxes promote historical literacy.
- **Factfiles** provide extra information on topics.
- **Focus Tasks** promote independent **learning, research** and **groupwork**.
- **Visit** ideas suggest places to go to bring History alive.
- Sample **People in History answers** are written to get a very good Higher Level mark, so Ordinary Level students do not need to write as much.
- The **Revision Plan** provides both guidelines for revising and a list of topics to revise.
- **The Answering Junior Certificate History Questions section** gives valuable guidance in getting the best out of the exam paper and the marking scheme.
- **The Glossary** focuses on key terms relevant to the exam.
-  links the textbook to further exercises in the Skills & Resources book.



## Structure

**Year 1** is common to both Higher and Ordinary Level students.

**Year 2** – Ordinary Level students can concentrate on the Special Study in each topic.

**Year 3** – Ordinary Level students must study International Relations in the 20th century (Part 1 **or** 2 **or** 3 **or** 4) **and either** Political Development in Ireland in the 20th century **or** Social Change in Ireland in the 20th century.

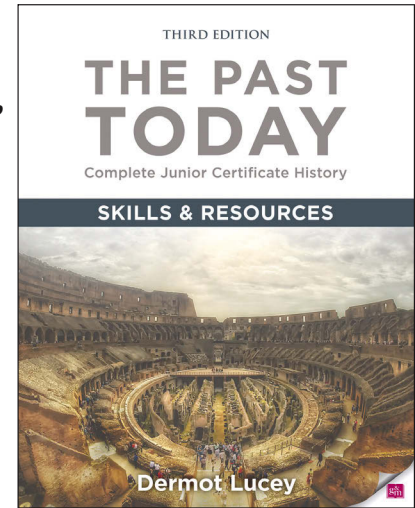
**Higher Level students** must study International Relations in the 20th century (Part 1 **and** 2 **or** 3 **or** 4) **along with** Political Developments in 20th-century Ireland **and** Social Change in Ireland in the 20th century.



The textbook is also available as an **eBook**, which includes informative videos and links to eTests. **eTest.ie** is an online multiple choice assessment tool which will help measure your progress and achievements.

**The Past Today** has helped thousands of students across the country to understand and engage with History. Now completely updated, **The Past Today**, together with its companion **The Past Today Skills and Resources**, will continue to help students to achieve their maximum potential through enjoyable, active and effective learning. We hope you enjoy it!

***Dermot Lucey***



Year 1

# How We Find Out About the Past



## 1 The Job of the Historian

### WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

At the end of this chapter you should understand ...

- *What is history?*
- *The work of the historian and the use of historical methods.*
- *Different types of sources and evidence.*

## What is History?

History is the **story of the past**, based on **evidence**. It is the story of people, places and events. It tells us how people lived, what they worked at, what they wore, how they organised their villages, towns and countries, and how they died and were buried. It also provides an explanation for events and for the changes brought about by those events. In other words, it tells us about **causes** and **results**.

### History is ...



- 1 finding out about the past,
- 2 using sources,
- 3 investigating what happened and why it happened.

### FACTFILE

'History' comes from the Greek word 'historia', meaning 'knowledge got from investigation', or 'enquiry'. The 'Father of History', Herodotus, is a Greek who wrote about 2,500 years ago.

## Finding the Evidence: Types of Sources

Historians collect their **evidence** from a wide variety of sources. Most of the sources are kept in **archives** and **museums**.

- An **archive** collects mainly written (documentary) sources.
- A **museum** collects and stores objects for study and display.

The huge amount of historical sources can be stored on **microfilm** (a small film) or **microfiche** (a single dot), which can be enlarged on special machines. New digital storage technologies like DVD, flash drivers and the **Internet** are also used to make sources more easily available. **Digital versions** of historical sources make it easier to store and to access them.

WRITTEN  
Documents  
Newspapers  
Diaries  
Letters

VISUAL  
Photographs  
Paintings  
Documentaries

ORAL  
Interviews  
Memories  
Recordings

NON-WRITTEN  
Buildings  
Ruins  
Monuments  
Objects (artefacts)



# Examining the Evidence

Sources help historians make sense of what happened in the past. The historian’s job is to use the sources to **reconstruct** the past. But historians must examine their sources carefully and ask questions about them. Historians have to judge the **reliability** of sources as they use them. Historians can have **different interpretations** of what happened in the past (or versions of history) depending on the sources they used, how reliable they thought the sources were and maybe because of their own viewpoints.

Some of the more important questions they have to ask about sources are:

- When was the source written or made? Was it at the time of the events or later?
- Who wrote or made the source? Why was it written or made? Can this source be trusted?
- What problems do sources present?

# When Was the Source Written or Made?

## Primary and Secondary Sources

Sources can be either **primary** or **secondary**.

Primary sources are first-hand accounts of what happened.

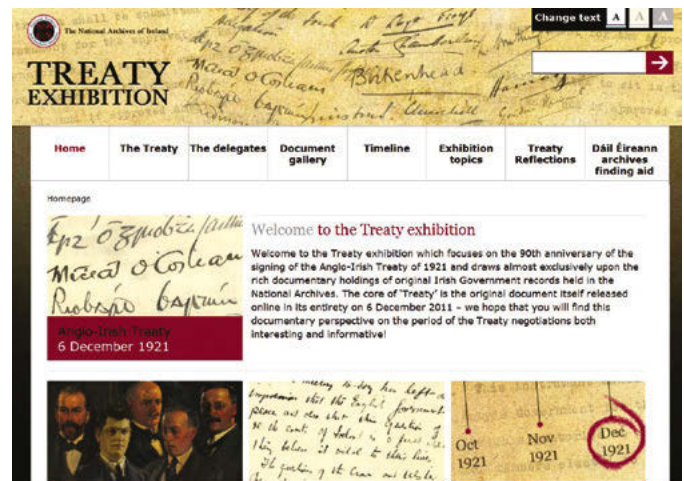
Primary sources are **original material**; they come directly from the time that is being studied. If an historian is studying Hitler and Nazi Germany, then photographs of Hitler, Hitler’s speeches and newspaper reports are all primary sources for the period.

Secondary sources come from after the time being studied.

Secondary sources tell us indirectly about the time being studied. They are often based on the primary or original sources. The textbook you are reading is a secondary source because it was written after the events that it describes and explains.



The National Museum in Dublin, where examples of Ireland’s material heritage and history can be seen.



The National Archives in Dublin holds the records of the modern Irish State. Above is a screen shot of an online exhibition on the Anglo-Irish Treaty, 1921.



This picture shows archivists working with documents.

- Give one piece of evidence from the picture to show that great care is taken to protect the documents.
- Mention two types of primary source documents which you might expect to find in an archive.

Now that we know what primary and secondary sources are, we can ask which is better.

- A primary source will tell us more clearly what life was like at the time.
- A secondary source can give us background information that will help us understand the primary source.

Thus, both sources are very useful to the historian.



Photographs of Hitler, dictator of Nazi Germany, are one type of primary source used to study his life.

### ASSESSING YOUR LEARNING

1. What is history?
2. What is a primary source and what is a secondary source for historians?
3. What is an archive? What is a museum? Give one example of each.

### Which of the following are primary and which are secondary sources?



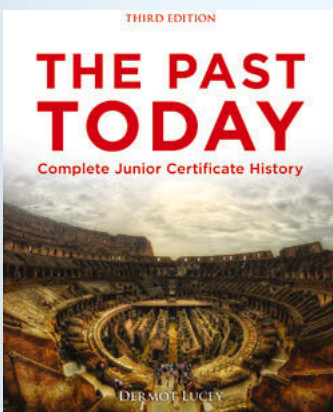
1



3



5



2



4

- 1 Photograph: Katie Taylor after being presented with an Olympic gold medal.
- 2 *The Past Today*.
- 3 A painting, *The Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife*, by Daniel Maclise (1854).
- 4 Front page of a newspaper.
- 5 An American election poster (1944) to re-elect the President.

# Who Wrote or Made the Source?

## Bias, Prejudice and Propaganda

To find out if a source is **reliable**, historians have to examine the point of view of the person who made the source.

People are **biased** or **show bias** when they deliberately select evidence to strengthen their own case and weaken the other cases. They give a **one-sided version** of what happened. They unfairly **favour** one group over another group, or are **prejudiced** against some group based on political, ethnic (racial) or sexual attitudes.

Historians also need to judge the **accuracy** of the information in the sources.

Participants or eyewitnesses may be liable to **exaggerate** aspects of what they saw.

**Propaganda** is used when you appeal to people's feelings in order to promote your point of view and convince people you are right. It often uses information that is deliberately selected or biased. The press, radio, television and posters can be used to make propaganda.

## What Problems do Sources Present?

Different kinds of sources – written, non-written, visual and oral – have different ways of presenting information to historians. Each type of source has its own **advantages** and **disadvantages**. Historians need to use as many sources as possible to ensure the accuracy and reliability of their information. We can learn how useful and reliable a source is when we are aware of these advantages and disadvantages.

## Written Sources

**Manuscripts** are books written by hand. Many of these books were copied by monks in monasteries. Manuscripts were usually written in Latin, so historians must know the language to study them or else study translations.

An **autobiography** is the story of a person's own life. Autobiographies are primary sources because the person is giving an account of his or her own experiences.

A **biography** is written by an historian about another person's life. Biographies are similar to other history books. They are **secondary** sources.



What are manuscripts? Are manuscripts primary or secondary sources?



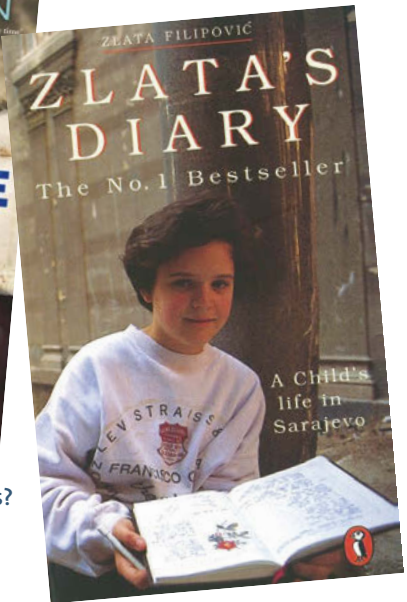
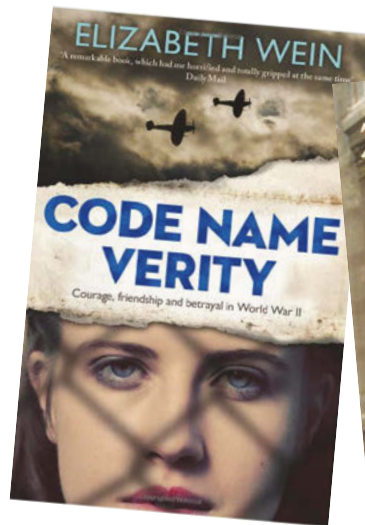
An autobiography: why is this a primary source? A biography: why is this a secondary source? Which is a more useful source for historians – an autobiography or a biography?

**Historical novels** are helpful in creating the atmosphere of earlier times and can help us understand how people lived. However, it is often difficult to tell **fact** (what happened) from **fiction** (what is imagined or made up).

**Diaries and letters** are primary sources. They provide information about people's private thoughts and help us explain why people carried out certain actions.

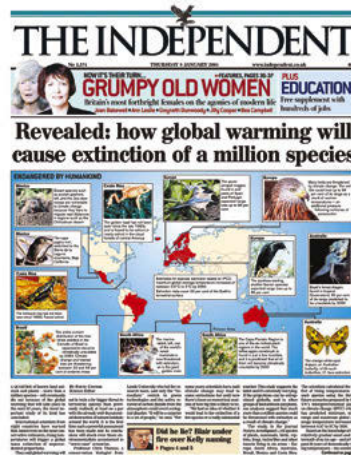
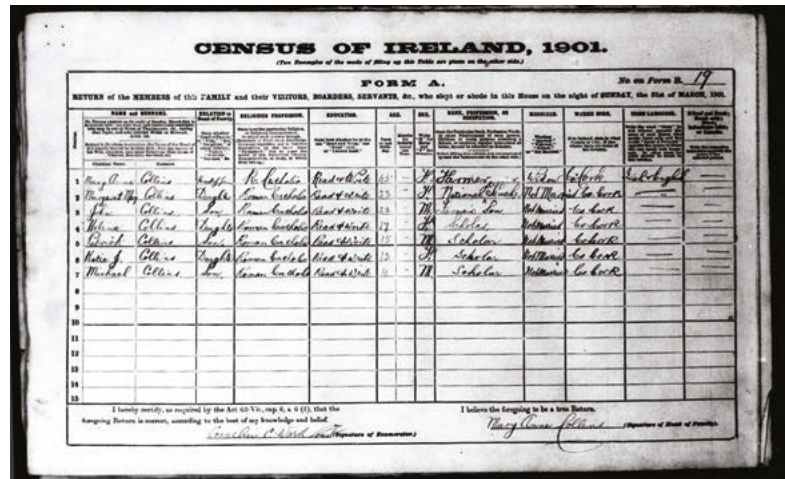
**Government records** cover many aspects of life – education, health, laws, crime, tax and industry. They are useful to the historian because they give accurate figures and information about all aspects of life. One special government record is the **census of population**, which includes information about families, businesses, housing, education, religion and emigration.

**Newspapers** record the events of the time on a daily or weekly basis. They cover all aspects of life – politics, sport and entertainment. They record **eyewitness statements** and provide photographs and advertisements. They are primary sources. But newspapers may be **biased** – they may select the information they print and the headlines they will use. In reading newspapers (and other documents), it is important to distinguish between **fact** (what happened) and **opinion** (what people think about what happened). Digital versions of newspapers are now available online.



How reliable are historical novels?

Zlata's Diary – what are the strengths and weaknesses of diaries as historical sources?



A completed census form for Michael Collins and family. Collins later became a key leader during the War of Independence and the negotiations for the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

Front pages showing how the *Daily Express* and *The Independent*, two newspapers, reported on climate change. What do these front pages say about newspapers as sources for historians?

**Ballads and songs** are usually composed to promote a particular viewpoint. When they tell a story, it is often one-sided. They are intended to rouse people's feelings.

## Visual Sources

**Photographs and paintings** (pictorial sources) capture a moment in time. They show us the way things were – the living conditions, the dress, the buildings and the transport. In the case of famous leaders, pictorial sources put faces to the names of the main characters of history and make them more real. We can also use pictorial sources to compare the past with the present. But photographs can be changed to give **false information** about the past, while paintings can present the people and places in a favourable light.

**Documentary films**, which use film of real events, add sound and action to give us a better understanding of what life was like. But the director of the documentary can use film in a biased way.

## Cartoons and Drawings

Cartoons are drawn to make a particular point or express a particular opinion. They tend to appeal to people's emotions (humour or pity or anger) to make their point.



O'Connell Street, Dublin in the early 20th century. How useful are photographs such as this to historians?



Celebrating Stalin's rise to power as dictator of the Soviet Union (Russia) in 1926; two enemies of Stalin have been eliminated in the bottom left photograph; bottom right, a painting based on the picture of Stalin.

FRIENDS OF MEDIEVAL DUBLIN

# Save our National Monument at Wood Quay

**PUBLIC MEETING**  
"WOOD QUAY – A EUROPEAN HERITAGE"  
**MANSION HOUSE**  
Thursday, March 29th  
at 7.30 p.m.  
Admission Free  
Chairman: Rev. Prof. F. X. Martin  
Main Speaker: Dr. Henrik Jansen (Svenborg Museum, Denmark)

**WOOD QUAY RALLY & MARCH**  
Saturday, March 31st  
at 11.00 a.m.  
Assembly Point:  
**Leinster House**



Is the cartoon in this poster biased?

## Maps

Maps are an important source of information for the historian. Maps show us buildings, land use, roads and bridges and can be used to show changes between one period and another.

## Oral Sources

Oral history is based on interviews or tape recordings of people's memories or recollections of events. They are often **eyewitness accounts** of the events. However, the people being interviewed or taped may have faulty memories. They may be biased or may not provide all the information.

## Non-Written Sources

### Artefacts and Buildings/Monuments

**Artefacts** (man-made objects such as pottery and axes), **ruins** and **monuments** demand special skills for study. People who study these are called **archaeologists**, and we shall examine their work in the next chapter.

## Historians and Time

### History is ...

Chronology – putting events in order of time.



Time is very important to historians. It helps historians put their stories in the order in which events happened. This order can help explain how and why events happened.

To put events in the right order, historians use the dates of the calendar. This study of time and dates is called **chronology** (Greek for 'knowledge of time'). By putting events in chronological order, historians are putting them in the order of the time they happened.

People and events fit into **centuries** and historic periods or **ages** – this helps historians to understand the time by making connections between the people and events.



How does this map of the Boyne Valley, Co. Meath show evidence of history on maps?

### ASSESSING YOUR LEARNING

1. Mention two types of primary and two types of secondary source an historian can use.
2. An eyewitness account is an example of which type of source – a primary source or a secondary source?
3. 'A diary is an example of a secondary source.' True or false?
4. 'A birth certificate is an example of a secondary source.' True or false?
5. Give one reason why historians prefer to obtain information from more than one source.
6. Which of the following is/are fact and which is/are opinion?
  - (i) The GAA organises Gaelic football.
  - (ii) Dublin is the best city in the world.
  - (iii) Ireland is a member of the EU.

### KEY TERMS

AD; archive; artefact; autobiography; BC; bias; biography; century; chronology; eyewitness; fact; fiction; manuscript; museum; opinion; oral sources; primary sources; propaganda; secondary sources; visual sources.

## Divisions of time

Apart from days, months and years, other important divisions of time are decades, centuries, ages, eras, BC and AD.

DECADE	10 years 520–529, 1670–1679, 2000–2009
CENTURY	100 years 500–599, 1800–1899, 2000–2099
AGE/ERA	A number of decades or centuries marked by a distinctive feature Stone Age, Age of Exploration, Computer Age, Jazz Age, Elizabethan era
BC	The years before the birth of Christ 896 BC, 544 BC, 101 BC
AD	The years after the birth of Christ AD 125, 1566, 1921, 1945

## ASSESSING YOUR LEARNING

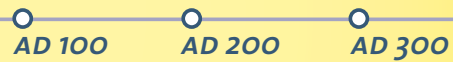
- Which centuries do the following years belong to? (i) 399–300 (ii) 200–299 (iii) 1300–1399 (iv) 1800–1899 (v) 1492 (vi) 1914
- Which years are at the beginning and end of the following centuries?  
(i) First century (ii) Sixteenth century (iii) Twenty-first century
- Which is earlier: 96 BC or 90 AD?
- Which is earlier: 200 BC or 299 BC?

In the Western world, the birth of Jesus Christ is an important dividing line in counting time. We call the years and centuries before Christ was born BC (before Christ). For example, the year 244 BC is in the third century BC, which began with the year 299 BC and ended with the year 200 BC. The years and centuries after Christ was born are called AD (Anno Domini, Latin for ‘the year of Our Lord’). For example, the year AD 1589 is in the sixteenth century, which began with the year AD 1500 and ended with the year AD 1599.

years before Christ

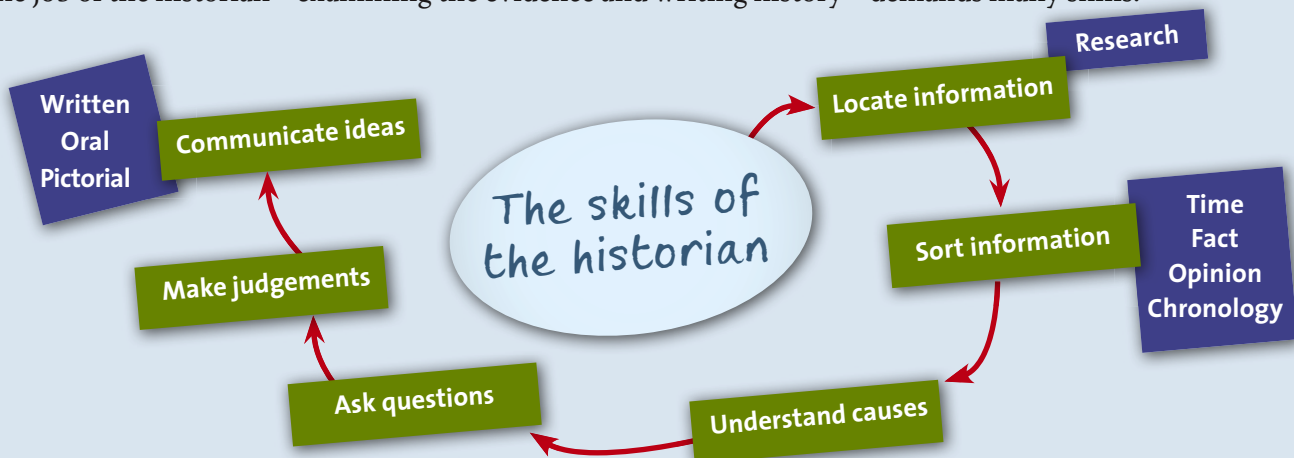


years after Christ (Anno Domini)



## The Skills of the Historian

The job of the historian – examining the evidence and writing history – demands many skills.



## PEOPLE IN HISTORY *The job of the historian*

I work as an historian. When I was a student, I learnt about the **skills** of the historian. I learnt that history is the story of the past, based on evidence. The job of the historian is to **reconstruct** the past using this **evidence**, which is based on **sources**. There are many types of sources – newspapers, photographs, diaries, memoirs, for example – but they can all be divided into primary sources or secondary sources. Primary sources are first-hand accounts – they come directly from the events I am studying while secondary sources are based on the primary sources and come from after the events. As an historian, I have to question my sources carefully and be wary of **bias** (favouring one side), **propaganda** (using information to promote your view) and the **accuracy** of the information. I also have to differentiate between **fact** (what happened) and **opinion** (views about what happened).

At present, I am **researching** the story of nearly 400 civilians who were killed during the Easter Rising in 1916. I began by reading some of the main textbooks on the Rising such as Fergal Tobin's *The Irish Revolution, 1912–25* to get background information. These are secondary sources. Then I researched the **newspapers** in the National Library, the *Irish Independent* and the *Irish Times* and others. As I was compiling the list of men, women and children who were killed, I looked up the **censuses** of 1901 and 1911 to get more information on them ([www.census.nationalarchives.ie/](http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/)).

I had to **cross-check** information I got from different sources and I had to judge the **reliability** of my sources, especially in relation to how people were killed. I also read **eye-witness** and participants' accounts in the National Archives after searching online first to see what documents the Archives stored. I had to check the records of the **death certificates** in Dublin. I found 'Joe Duffy's list of Children Killed in 1916 Rising' online. I attended the memorial service in April 2014 for the 40 children under 17 who were killed in the Rising. I visited **Glasnevin Cemetery** and other cemeteries to trace the records of the burials. I also met the descendants of some of those who died to compare the family stories (**oral history**) with the contemporary accounts. I had to record all my information on computer and I had to ensure my information was accurate.



### Read More

Ian Dawson, *What is History?*,  
Hodder Education (2003).

### On the Web

*PBS History Detectives* –  
[www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives](http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives)

[www.facebook.com/historydetectives](http://www.facebook.com/historydetectives)



# The Job of the Historian – ASSESSMENT

## EXAM QUESTIONS

### PICTURES



Picture A



Picture B



Picture C



- Pictures A, B and C are propaganda posters from the Second World War. Each poster has a different message.

  - What does the poster in Picture A ask people to do?
  - What does the poster in Picture B ask people to do?
  - Why is the woman in Picture C being accused of murder?
  - Are these posters primary or secondary sources for studying the Second World War? Explain your answer.
  - What is propaganda and why are these posters regarded as propaganda?
  - Apart from posters, name another method of spreading propaganda.

- Picture D1 shows the major leaders of the USSR (Russia) at the official opening of the Moscow–Volga Canal in 1936. The person marked X is Stalin, who ruled the USSR from 1928 until 1953. Picture D2 is the same picture after it was changed, on Stalin's orders, in 1939.

Picture D1



Picture D2



- Why would political leaders consider it important to be photographed on an occasion such as that seen in picture D1?
- Basing your answer on pictures D1 and D2, give one reason why the historian cannot always rely on visual sources.
- Is picture D1 a primary source or a secondary source of information for the historian? Briefly explain your answer.

### SHORT QUESTIONS

- Fill in the missing words in the following sentences in your exercise copy.

  - The official population count, taken every ten years, is called a ...
  - A place where artefacts of historical or archaeological interest are housed and displayed to the public is called a ...
  - A place where public or historical records, charts or documents are housed and preserved is called an ...
  - A film or television programme that uses characters, objects and scenes from real life is called a ...
  - The spreading of the ideas of a particular group, movement or individual to bring about change is called ...
  - The photographic film that preserves a microscopic record of documents and which can be enlarged is called ...

### FOCUS TASK

Draw up a box in your exercise copy similar to the box below and fill in the information – list the sources, say whether they are primary or secondary and give at least one advantage/strength and one disadvantage/weakness for each source. Include eight of the following sources: manuscripts; textbooks; biography; autobiography; photographs; diaries; paintings; documentaries; memoirs; interviews/oral history; newspapers; censuses.

Source	P or S	Strength	Weakness

## 2 The Work of the Archaeologist

### WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

At the end of this chapter you should understand ...

- *What is archaeology?*
- *How archaeologists find sites for excavation.*
- *How archaeologists excavate sites.*
- *How archaeologists investigate what they have found.*
- *The role of conservation in archaeology.*

### What is Archaeology?

History depends on many sources – written, non-written, visual and oral. The story of people is long, and only a small part of it can be told by examining written, visual and oral sources. Evidence for the early history of people comes from **material** remains.

#### Archaeology is ...

the story of the past from material remains.



Material remains are mainly **artefacts** and **buildings**.

#### Artefacts are ...

objects made by people, such as axes, spears, pots, coins and rings.



#### ASSESSING YOUR LEARNING

1. What is archaeology?
2. What is the difference between history and archaeology?
3. What is an artefact?
4. Where are artefacts stored?
5. The term 'prehistory' refers to the time before writing was invented. True or false?

Archaeology investigates all aspects of life – what people made and ate, what kind of buildings they lived in and how they organised their lives.

**Artefacts** and **buildings** are the only sources of evidence for the time before the invention of writing. These are **primary sources**. In Ireland, the story of the country from about 7000 BC, when the first people came here, up to about AD 400 depends mostly on archaeology. Sometimes this period is called **prehistory** because there is no written evidence to tell us how people lived.

#### Prehistory is ...

the history of people before writing was invented.



# Finding the Sites

The first job of the archaeologist is to find sites for investigation. Some sites are above ground, but much of the archaeological evidence lies buried beneath the ground. Many different methods are used to find these sites.

## Above Ground

Some of the evidence is found easily because part or all of the remains can be seen above ground. **Castles** are one of the most common archaeological remains found above ground in Ireland.

## Below Ground

### (i) Chance Discoveries

Some important archaeological sites and features have been found by chance or accident, when people ploughing or building have uncovered the evidence. An example from Ireland is the **Ardagh Chalice**, found in a potato field in Co. Limerick in 1868.

The building of new roads and city blocks has uncovered archaeological evidence. This has resulted in **rescue or salvage archaeology**. The sites have to be investigated before developments can go ahead.

### (ii) Stories from History

Many stories of events that happened a long time ago have been based on actual happenings. These stories were later recorded in old documents, manuscripts or maps. For example, a German archaeologist believed the story of the Siege of Troy. His excavations in Turkey uncovered the remains of the city.

### (iii) Geophysical survey

In geophysical surveys, scientific instruments are used to find archaeological features under the surface of the ground. The survey creates maps of these features beneath the surface without digging the ground. Depending on the equipment used, ruined structures or artefacts can be identified. An example of a major geophysical survey was the work done on and around the **Hill of Tara** in Co. Meath in the past twenty years.



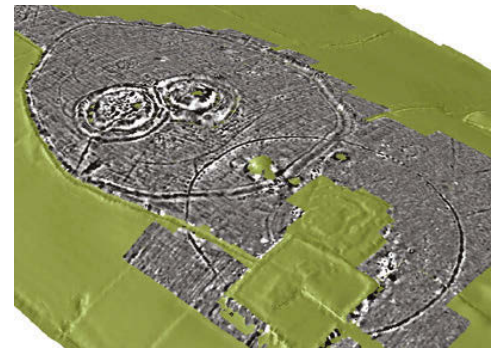
Terracotta warriors – discovered by chance in China when a well was dug.



Dublin Castle – a site above ground.



An archaeological dig in Dublin as part of salvage or rescue archaeology to investigate what is under the ground before a new building is constructed.



The geophysical surveys undertaken by the Department of Archaeology, University College, Dublin on the Hill of Tara, Co. Meath provided information for later archaeological digs.



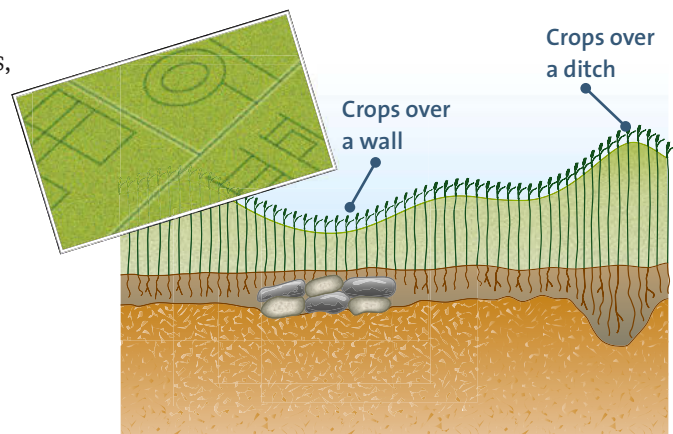
#### (iv) Aerial Photography

Aerial photography can show evidence of ancient buildings, walls, roads and fields, which are often hard to find because they are buried beneath the ground.

**Crop marks** (patterns in the way crops grow) indicate that a feature lies under the soil. Crops grow taller and richer where the soil is deeper over old pits and ditches. Crops grow shorter and lighter in thinner soil over walls.

#### (v) Underwater Evidence

The use of sonar, miniature submarines and diving gear can help uncover archaeological remains under the sea, particularly ships.



Aerial photographs show up patterns of towns, fields and roads in the ground. Crop marks create these patterns when crops grow taller over ditches and shorter over walls.

## Excavations

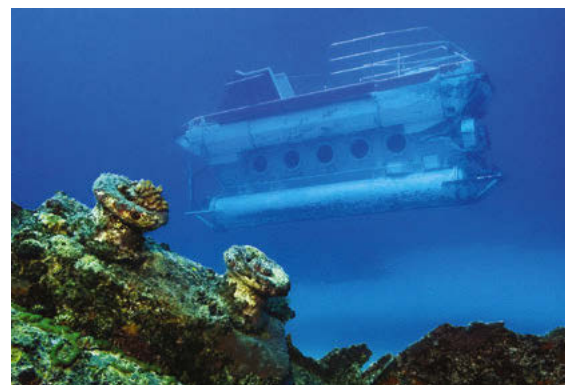
Once the sites are found, archaeologists have to dig into the ground (excavate) to get the evidence. The **excavation**, or 'dig', is planned carefully. Excavations show human activities at a particular time and also changes over time. But because excavations destroy much of the evidence, everything has to be recorded.

- (i) The first step is to **survey** the site and draw an accurate plan of the area.
- (ii) Mechanical **diggers** can be used to take away the **topsoil**, especially if the site is large.
- (iii) A grid of **squares** is mapped out to accurately record each of the 'finds'.
- (iv) Archaeologists dig into the ground carefully, using **shovels** and **trowels**, for more careful work.
- (v) **Brushes** are used to clear around objects. **Sieves** are used to recover small artefacts.

All **records** must be kept very accurately.

- (i) Artefacts, bones and plant remains are **numbered** and **stored** in separate bags.
- (ii) They are **catalogued** in a site book or a field computer.
- (iii) **Photographs** and **drawings** record the entire site at each stage in the dig, as well as the objects found.
- (iv) The finds are sorted and investigated in a **laboratory**.
- (v) The finds are then boxed and stored or put on displays in **museums**.

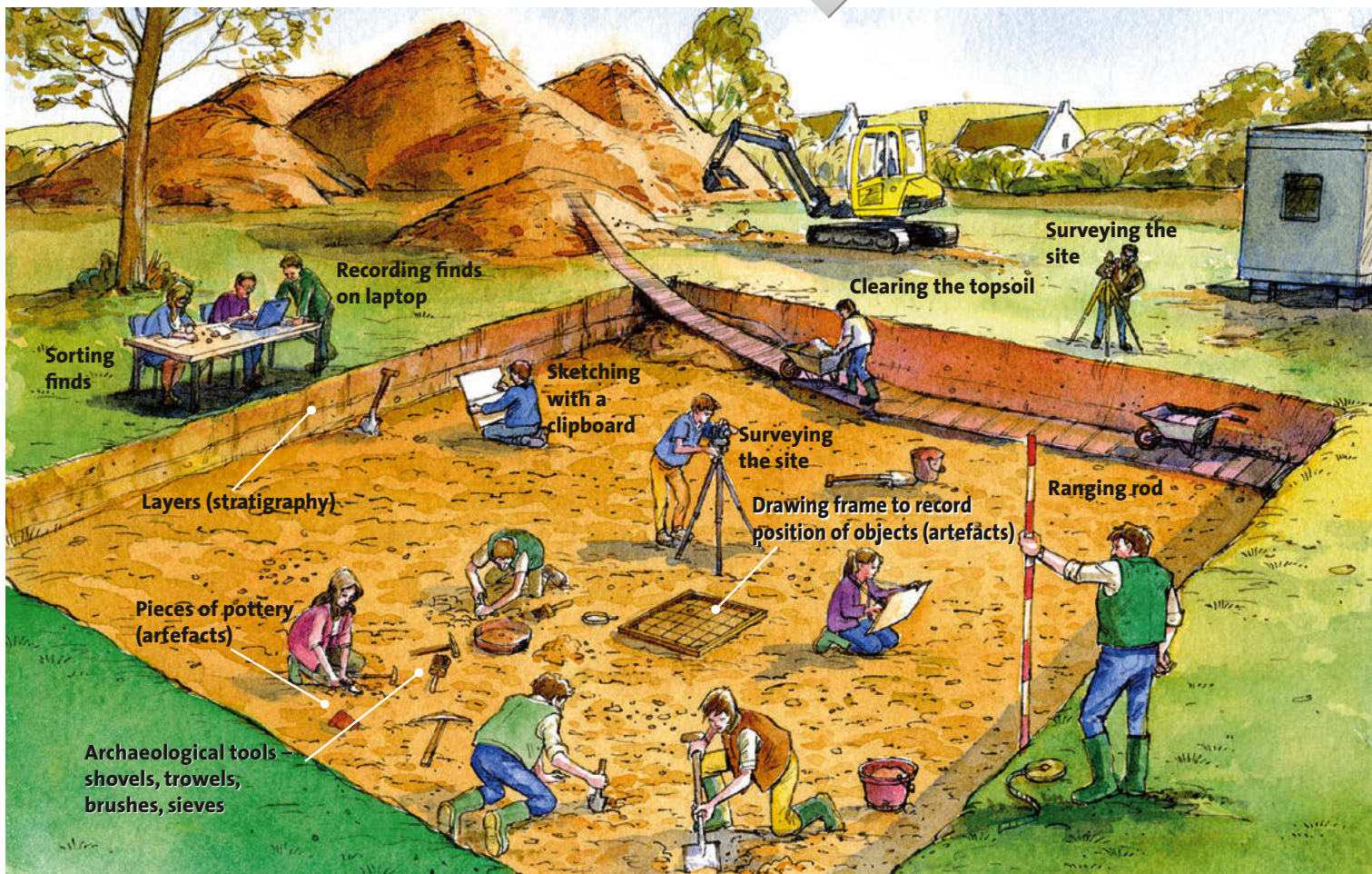
**Scientists** examine any bones, skulls and teeth for age and for injuries. They also examine **pollen** to determine what plants were growing.



Undersea archaeology has been very successful in recent decades as new technology has led to the discovery of the *Titanic* and other ships, including ships of the Spanish Armada off the coast of Ireland.

#### FACTFILE

In Ireland, archaeologists need a licence to excavate since monuments and artefacts are protected by law. It is illegal to use metal detectors, except under licence.



## Testing the Evidence

An archaeological excavation and tools.

### Dating

One of the most important tasks of archaeologists is to date the objects they find. A variety of methods are used to do this.

#### (i) Stratigraphy

The basic idea of **stratigraphy** is that the earliest/oldest layers and finds are at the bottom, and the latest/youngest are at the top. Each of the layers was laid down or

deposited on top of the other. The underlying layer was deposited first and is therefore earlier/older than the layer above it.

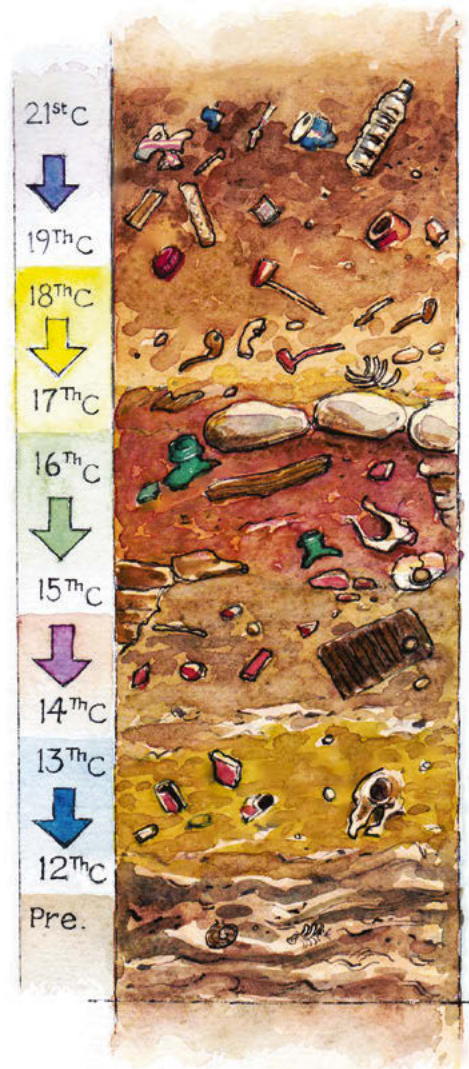
Stratigraphy: layers laid down in towns and cities over centuries.

### (ii) Coins and Pottery

Coins have a date or head stamped on them. Objects found with them will be from the same time. Archaeologists also use pottery to date other objects found with them.



Coins can provide dates and names of rulers.



### Visit . . .

the History Hunters Experience in Dublinia or Kerry County Museum in Tralee for a display on the work of the archaeologist.



### (iii) Tree-Ring Dating

Each year, trees grow a ring of new wood. These rings can be seen in cross-sections of the tree trunk. It is possible to work out when this tree was growing and when it was cut down by studying the rings. This is called **tree-ring dating** or **dendrochronology**.

To use this method, archaeologists have built up a continuous record of tree-ring growth going back thousands of years. In Ireland, this record was compiled in Queen's University in Belfast. It records tree-ring growth in our country back to 5300 BC. New pieces of wood found in ruins or buildings in different parts of Ireland are then compared with the record to date when the timber was growing and when it was used.

