

Conclusion

This package has provided six sample research topics based on census data. Each sample study presented here adheres strictly to the leaving certificate guidelines that ordinary level students should present an essay of 600-800 words and higher level students should present an essay of 1200-1500 words. The new leaving certificate history course stresses the importance of working with documentary evidence. There is also much scope for the student to work independently and to develop research skills. Census data provides excellent material for such research.

Census material is a primary source and students can use it to 'do history' and investigate the local past. Local history is a growing and vibrant subject in Ireland today, and research topics such as those outlined in the sample studies above mean that the student can become involved in the practice of local history. Students may find themselves working on untapped local census sources and they may leave a copy of their research study into the school library, or even the local branch library. They would thus be contributing to the local historical record by choosing census material as the basis for their study.

The National Archive, Bishop Street, Dublin 8 houses the full set of census data. However many local and county libraries have limited census returns for their own area and local libraries are much more accessible for many students. Many libraries have microfilm or microfiche editions of the censuses for their area, and a quick telephone call to the local studies librarian is recommended to ascertain just what census material is housed in the library. An appointment to view the census material can also be made by phone – and so the student is ready to start the research study.

Using census material as the basis for the research study may appeal to students for a number of reasons.

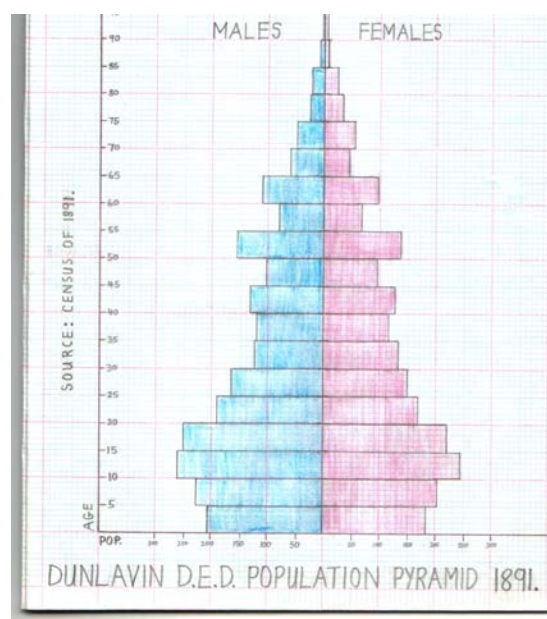
1. Many students will have an interest in their own area. A research study such as the ones outlined may appeal to their sense of place.
2. Students may also enjoy doing a research study such as sample study number six above if they can apply it to the household of some of their own ancestors. They may thus become interested in family history and genealogy.
3. Students who take geography for the leaving certificate will be familiar with population pyramids and may enjoy constructing and interpreting them at first hand as outlined in sample study number two above.
4. Students who are good at maths may enjoy graphing the information, working with statistics and calculating percentages. This approach is used in sample studies three and four above. These graphs need not be done on computer. They may be accurately hand-drawn, as the scans below illustrate.
5. Students may simply enjoy working with and interpreting a primary source, as this will be a new experience for many of them.

Whatever the reason, the use of census data as a source in the teaching and learning of history makes sense. This package has not specifically mentioned transition year, but a transition year history module based on the census would be easy to adapt from the approaches outlined above. This would involve the teacher visiting a repository to find the relevant census information first, and then photocopying it for classroom use. Such a transition year module would have many advantages and would introduce the idea of working with census material at the beginning of the senior cycle. This way, when students take history at leaving certificate level, much of the groundwork would be already done, and their research studies would indeed make sense of the census.

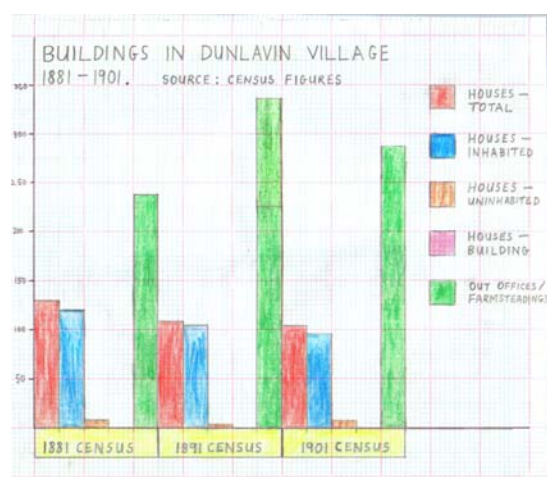
Note regarding graphs

Although the graphs in sample studies two, three and four have been drawn out on computer, this need not be the case. These graphs can be accurately and more than adequately drawn by hand directly into the official answer books as the sample scans of a population pyramid, a bar graph and a pie chart below illustrate.

Sample Study Two, Figure 2. Dunlavin D.E.D. population pyramid 1891.



Sample Study Three, Figure 2. Buildings in Dunlavin Village 1881-1901.



AGES OF THE PUPILS

SOURCE: 1901 CENSUS.

| Age Group | Percentage |
|-----------|------------|
| UNDER 5 | 60 |
| 5-14 | 13 |
| 14-15 | 6 |
| 15-18 | 2 |
| OVER 18 | 0 |

CENSUS OF IRELAND, 1901.

(Two Examples of the mode of filling up this Table are given on the other side.)

FORM A.

No. on Form B. 1

RETURN of the MEMBERS of this FAMILY and their VISITORS, BOARDERS, SERVANTS, &c., who slept or abode in this House on the night of SUNDAY, the 31st of MARCH, 1901.

| AGE. | SEX. | RANK, PROFESSION, OR OCCUPATION. | MARRIAGE. | WHERE BORN. | IRISH LANGUAGE. | IF DEAF AND DUMB, SIGN ONLY, IN INK, or LIBRARIAN. | NAME AND SURNAME. | | RELATION TO HEAD OF FAMILY. | RELIGIOUS PROFESSION. | EDUCATION. | AGE. | SEX. | RANK, PROFESSION, OR OCCUPATION. | MARRIAGE. | WHERE BORN. | IRISH LANGUAGE. | IF DEAF AND DUMB, SIGN ONLY, IN INK, or LIBRARIAN. |
|------|--------|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|--|-------------------|----------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|------------|------|--------|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------------|--|
| | | | | | | | Christian Name. | Surname. | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Male | Labourer | Married | Irish | Irish | | James | Doyle | Head of Family | Roman Catholic | Irish | 50 | Male | Labourer | Married | Irish | Irish | |
| 2 | Female | Labourer | Married | Irish | Irish | | Elizabeth | Doyle | Wife of Head | Roman Catholic | Irish | 48 | Female | Labourer | Married | Irish | Irish | |
| 3 | Male | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | | John | Doyle | Son | Roman Catholic | Irish | 24 | Male | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | |
| 4 | Female | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | | Mary | Doyle | Daughter | Roman Catholic | Irish | 22 | Female | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | |
| 5 | Male | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | | Thomas | Doyle | Son | Roman Catholic | Irish | 20 | Male | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | |
| 6 | Female | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | | Elizabeth | Doyle | Daughter | Roman Catholic | Irish | 18 | Female | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | |
| 7 | Male | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | | James | Doyle | Son | Roman Catholic | Irish | 16 | Male | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | |
| 8 | Female | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | | Mary | Doyle | Daughter | Roman Catholic | Irish | 14 | Female | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | |
| 9 | Male | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | | Thomas | Doyle | Son | Roman Catholic | Irish | 12 | Male | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | |
| 10 | Female | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | | Elizabeth | Doyle | Daughter | Roman Catholic | Irish | 10 | Female | Labourer | Single | Irish | Irish | |
| 11 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

I hereby certify, as required by the Act 63 Vic, cap. 6, s. 6 (1), that the foregoing Return is correct, according to the best of my knowledge and belief.

James Doyle (Signature of Enumerator.)

I believe the foregoing to be a true Return.

James Doyle (Signature of Head of Family.)