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An Chomhairle Náisiúnta
Curraim agus Measúnachta
National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment

Leaving Certificate Classical Studies

Guidance to support the
Research Study

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Introduction

This document, *Leaving Certificate Classical Studies: Guidance to support the Research Study*, provides

- detail of the nature and scope of the Research Study, described in the curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Classical Studies
- guidance and support for schools, teachers and students on undertaking the research study and completing the Research Study Report (RSR).

This guidance should be used in conjunction with the curriculum specification for Leaving Certificate Classical Studies, which can be accessed at

<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Senior-cycle/Senior-Cycle-Subjects/Classical-Studies/>

A brief for the conduct of the Research Study will be issued to students by the State Examinations Commission and will be accessible at www.examinations.ie.

Assessment for Certification in Classical Studies

Assessment for certification is based on the aim, objectives and learning outcomes of the Leaving Certificate Classical Studies specification.

ASSESSMENT COMPONENTS

There are two assessment components in Leaving Certificate Classical Studies:

- Written examination (80%)
- Research Study Report (20%)

Both components of assessment reflect the relationship between the application of skills and the theoretical content of the specification. Differentiation at the point of assessment is achieved through written examinations at two levels – Ordinary level and Higher level. A common brief will be issued for Ordinary level and Higher level.

Mode	Timing			Ordinary level weighting	Higher level weighting
Written examination	End of Year 2			80%	80%
		Section A	Stimulus-driven response	60%	40%
		Section B	Extended answer	20%	40%
Research study	As per SEC brief		Written report	20%	20%
Total				100%	100%

Overview of the Research Study

This assessment component requires students to investigate, evaluate and report on a topic that is anchored in the Leaving Certificate Classical Studies specification. The research study will be assessed through the medium of a report, called the Research Study Report. The report will take the format of a digital pro-forma booklet. The report will be submitted to the State Examinations Commission in sixth year.

The brief will outline topics from which students will choose one, in consultation with their teacher, as the basis for their research study. The brief will also outline the parameters for the Research Study Report. The research study will be completed in sixth year.

Topics set out in the brief will relate to the four key areas outlined in the specification:

- Material culture
- Literature
- History
- Thought and ideas

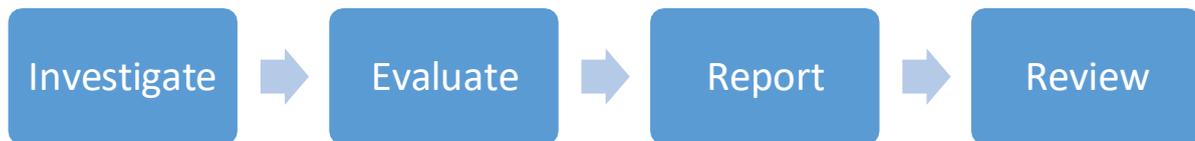
In particular, the research study requires students to demonstrate that they can:

- research and process information that is relevant and meaningful to understanding or expanding on a topic related to the specification
- synthesise and evaluate information in order to apply concepts connected to the Classical Studies specification and make an informed judgement
- understand social, political, artistic, ethical, historical and literary concepts and aspects relating to the classical world and their relevance to the contemporary world.

The key skills of information processing, communicating, critical and creative thinking, and being personally effective can be applied through the student's engagement in the research study.

Students are assessed on the basis of the Research Study Report. During the process of completing the research study, students should keep a portfolio/folder (in hardcopy/digital format) of the research process. This portfolio or folder may include various drafts of the report and other material gathered as part of the research process. Each student must complete and submit an individual report on his/her research study, which must be authenticated by the teacher. The maintenance of records could be an important part of the authentication procedure. Students must not submit their portfolio to the State Examinations Commission with their report.

The process of working on the research study is summarised in the graphic below:



The process of the research study

Students will:

- **Investigate** a focused aspect of a topic selected from the brief
- **Evaluate** what is revealed by the research process, and make judgements about the significance of research findings
- **Report** on findings and conclusions arrived at through the process of research by writing up the Research Study Report
- **Review** the process undertaken and reflect on learning and insights acquired

Process for Completing the Research Study

Purpose of the study

The research study aims to develop in students a spirit of inquiry about the ancient world and a range of skills that will facilitate the conduct of the inquiry. It allows students to engage in a measure of self-directed learning that is grounded in the procedural values of academic research.

Criteria

A choice of topics, relating to key areas of the subject, will be provided to students in the brief. The topics will reflect the 4 key areas designated in the specification. Each student will pursue an individual focus of enquiry. This will involve the study of a subject of significance in the field of classical studies/the history of the ancient world, based on one topic from the brief, chosen by the student under the guidance of the teacher.

Choosing a focus of enquiry

Students will be required to identify a focus of enquiry based on the chosen topic from the brief. When choosing a focus for the research study, the following criteria should be considered:

- The subject for investigation must be clearly defined. Its focus should be narrow rather than broad to allow for depth of investigation.
- Sources used should be either primary or specialist secondary, or a combination of both.

The following guidance sets out how students should approach the process of completing the research study.

1. SELECT AN OPTION FROM THE BRIEF

The State Examinations Commission brief will set out the topics from which students can choose. The topics will relate to the main aspects of the subject around which learning outcomes are based:

- Material culture
- Literature
- History
- Thought and ideas

Students should select a topic based on the brief that is of genuine interest to them, and about which they have a real sense of curiosity. This should follow careful consideration of the topics in the brief and a thorough exploration of the possibilities and opportunities for research that the topic allows.

2. IDENTIFY A FOCUS OF ENQUIRY TO BE PURSUED

Students should identify a specific focus that relates to the chosen topic from the brief. The rationale for the focus must relate to the wider knowledge and content of the learning outcomes in the Leaving Certificate Classical Studies specification. The rationale should include consideration of why the chosen focus is worthy of research. The student should be able to justify the chosen focus of enquiry in terms of its wider significance or importance in the history of the ancient world. The wording of the title of the research study should reflect the narrow focus of the enquiry.

Care is needed in identifying a focus of enquiry and the choice should be made in consultation with the teacher. Students should not undertake substantive work on the research study until

the teacher has approved their approach. To help students choose a focus, the following should be considered:

- What do I already know about the proposed focus of my research study?
- What else do I need to know about the focus of my research study?
- What is the central question/argument/issue?
- Why is this an important question/argument/issue?

3. DEVELOP AN APPROACH TO THE CONDUCT OF THE RESEARCH

Students should consider an approach to the conduct of the enquiry that will provide a structure and plan for the research. The approach should include the identification of aims that the student intends to achieve through the conduct of the research. The approach should also signal key research questions that the student intends to pursue and how they intend to pursue them. This might include a scoping exercise whereby possible sources of information or data could be sourced.

4. SELECT A SUITE OF RELEVANT AND RELIABLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Students should consult appropriate sources of information to support the conduct of their research. Appropriate sources could include books, journal articles, newspaper or magazine articles, websites, podcasts, blogs, interviews or television and radio documentaries. Sources used in their research should be authentic and verifiable and cited fully as a bibliography at the end of the report. Students should also be aware of the strengths or weaknesses associated with sources used and may wish to address such features when reflecting on the process of the research study.

All secondary sources must be acknowledged, whether quoting, paraphrasing or borrowing ideas. Appendix A on page 17 provides further information on referencing sources. Before using internet-based material, students should evaluate online material for reliability and validity. Appendix B on page 19 provides further information on evaluating and citing internet sources.

5. DEVELOP A WELL-STRUCTURED AND COHERENT WRITTEN ACCOUNT

Students will present their research findings in the Research Study Report. This report will be entered into a structured template in a digital pro-forma booklet. The main feature of this template where students will set out their research findings is the Extended Essay. This essay should be a well-structured, logically argued and coherent written account. The essay should have an introduction, a line of logical reasoning and a conclusion. The essay should draw on the sources used in the process of research, with references and quotations as appropriate. The essay should demonstrate how well, or to what extent, the student has achieved their aims. The student should strive to conform to the features of academic writing, adopting a narrow focus to allow for depth of treatment and taking care to support stances or viewpoints with evidence.

6. REFLECT ON NEW KNOWLEDGE, INSIGHTS, UNDERSTANDING AND SKILLS ACQUIRED

Students should be able to critically review the research process undertaken and offer thoughts on the experience of being a researcher. They should be able to reflect on new knowledge, insights, understanding and skills acquired and how their thinking has changed as a result of undertaking the research study. The reflection should also allow for thoughts about the process of research itself and how well the approach to the research worked. The reflection may consider the strengths and weaknesses of sources used.

For instance, students could consider some of the following:

- Have I acquired new knowledge and/or understanding about the classical world?
- Is the new knowledge and/or understanding I have gained significant?
- Was my research process as effective as I could make it? What aspects did I do well and how could I improve in future research?

- Have I developed any skills through engagement with the research study? If so, how could such skill positively impact any future learning/experience?
- Has the undertaking of this research changed my thinking or opinions in any way?
- Has undertaking the research process raised other/new questions relating to my focus of inquiry?

Time needed

The research study and Research Study Report will be completed over the course of the student's two-year engagement with the specification. While students may be introduced to the research study early in 5th year and may consider possible areas of interest that they wish to pursue, substantive work will not commence until the publication of a brief by the State Examinations Commission. On completion of the research study each student must produce an individual Research Study Report under teacher supervision. The level of teacher oversight must be such that it is possible to authenticate the work as that of the individual student. Authentication procedures will be put in place to ensure compliance with this requirement.

This brief will be issued to students early in the second term of 5th year. Further information will issue in due course in relation to the submission of the Research Study Report to the State Examinations Commission.

The Research Study Report

The Research Study Report will be presented in a format prescribed by the State Examinations Commission. A common brief will be issued by the State Examinations Commission for all students studying Leaving Certificate Classical Studies. This accounts for the fact that at the time of undertaking the research study and writing up the Research Study Report students may not yet have decided what level of written paper they will take. Differentiation will apply when the Research Study Report is being marked. The completion date for submission of the Report will be in January of the year that students are in 6th year and sitting Leaving Certificate examinations. The precise date will be set by the State Examinations Commission and communicated to schools in a formal circular.

FORMAT OF THE REPORT

The Research Study Report will contain the following sections:

- **Rationale and Approach:** In this section, students could define and justify the proposed subject of study, identify the aims and key research questions to be addressed, and provide an overview of the approach to be adopted.
150 words will be allowed for the Rationale and Approach.
- **The Extended Essay:** This section will allow for the main findings and conclusions arrived at by the student to be set out. Coherence of structure is required: the essay should have a clear introduction and conclusion, and, in between, a line of logical development.
The Extended Essay should not exceed 1400 words in length.
- **Review and Reflection:** This section will set out the student's review and reflections, both about the process of research undertaken, and the theme that

was chosen for research. New insights and learning acquired will be a focus here. Consideration could also be given to the strengths and weaknesses of sources used.

150 words will be allowed for the Review and Reflection.

- **References:** A bibliography of sources used should be included in a separate page at the end of the report booklet. The listing of references and sources will not be included in the word length for the Research Study Report.

Guidance on completing the bibliography is offered in Appendix A and Appendix B at the end of these guidelines.

Students may insert illustrations, sketches, photographs or images that are directly related to the research study and which support or clarify either the process or outcomes of the research study in the Research Study Report.

Assessment Criteria for the Research Study

The assessment criteria relate to the performance of Ordinary level and Higher level students in the research study, although a differentiated marking scheme will apply.

A high level of achievement in this component is characterised by a highly developed knowledge and understanding of the subject chosen for study. Candidates demonstrate a remarkable coherence of content, approach and structure in presenting their research findings. Candidates display distinctive research and understanding of the role of sources and evidence in forming judgements and drawing conclusions. Candidates demonstrate a deep awareness of the broader context of the subject chosen in the history of the classical world, making a compelling case for the significance of the subject chosen.

A moderate level of achievement in this component is characterised by some knowledge and understanding of the subject chosen for study. Candidates show attempts at coherence of content, approach and structure in presenting their research findings. Candidates display good research and some understanding of the role of sources and evidence in forming judgements and drawing conclusions. Candidates demonstrate some awareness of the broader context of the subject chosen in the history of the classical world, making some reference to the significance of the subject chosen.

A low level of achievement in this component is characterised by limited knowledge and understanding of the subject chosen for study. The findings presented lack coherence, showing little understanding of the role of sources and evidence in forming judgements and drawing conclusions. There is little awareness of the broader context of the subject chosen in the history of the classical world, with little or no reference to the significance of the subject chosen.

Marks for each section of the RSR report are allocated as in the table below. The Overall Coherence will be based on an assessment of how successfully the student integrates the

components of the report in developing a coherent, structured, and balanced presentation in accordance with the criteria outlined above.

Rationale and Approach	10 marks
Extended Essay	60 marks
Review and Reflection	10 marks
Overall Coherence (judged by Examiner)	20 marks

Differentiation in the Research Study

Differentiation will be effected at the point of assessment through the application of separate Higher and Ordinary level marking schemes. The scheme to be used will be determined by the level at which the candidate takes the written examination.

Reasonable Accommodations/Inclusion

The Classical Studies specification requires that students engage with the study of the ancient world on an ongoing basis throughout the course with the Research Study Report a pre-submitted component. The emphasis in the research study on investigative activities may have implications for students with physical/medical/sensory and/or specific learning difficulties. In this context, the scheme of Reasonable Accommodations, operated by the State Examinations Commission, is designed to assist students in the Leaving Certificate who have physical/medical/sensory and/or specific learning difficulties.

The Teacher's Role

To facilitate the provision of feedback to students during their work on the research study, the process of completing the Research Study should be viewed as part of teaching and learning, and not solely for assessment purposes. It is envisaged that teachers will guide, support and supervise throughout the process. Support may include:

- Clarifying the requirements of the research study.
- Looking at the brief issued by the State Examinations Commission identifying links to the specification and associated learning outcomes.
- Identifying what areas of the specification students may need to engage with in order to facilitate the choice of topics.
- Prompting the student's critical thinking in relation to the topics drawn by reflecting on the questions listed below:
 - What do I want to know about the topic?
 - What do I already know about the topic?
 - What do I need to know?
 - What is my central question?
- Ensuring that the focus of enquiry and approach adopted by the student is appropriate and related to the learning outcomes of the specification.
- Facilitating access to appropriate resources where possible.
- Providing instructions at strategic intervals to facilitate the timely completion of the research study.
- Providing supports for students with special educational needs as outlined on page 14.

It is important to ensure that each student has a distinct focus of research and adopts their own approach to the research. This allows for teachers to authenticate that work undertaken by each student is their own. The research study is not a group project although collaborative research and discussion is actively encouraged as part of ongoing teaching and learning.

It is not envisaged that the level of support from teachers involves teachers to edit draft reports, or to provide model text or answers to be used in the student's evidence of learning.

Useful Links

- Leaving Certificate Classical Studies curriculum specification:
<https://www.curriculumonline.ie/Senior-cycle/Senior-Cycle-Subjects/Classical-Studies/>
- Supports for teachers of Leaving Certificate Classical Studies from the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST): www.pdst.ie
- State Examinations Commission: All instructions for completing and submitting the Research Study will be included in a brief, issued by the State Examinations Commission (SEC) during the second year of senior cycle on www.examinations.ie.
- The website of the Classical Association of Ireland – Teachers (CAI-T), the subject association for teachers of Classical Studies, as well as Leaving Certificate Ancient Greek and Latin and Junior Cycle Classics: <http://www.classicalassociation.ie/cai-t.html>

Appendix A: Guidance on Referencing Sources of Information

- All research sources used (books, articles, websites, person-to-person interviews, etc.) must be duly acknowledged.
- Where students are citing written sources, they should give the author's name, the title of the book or article, and the name of the publisher and the place and date of publication.

Example:

Fox, Robert Lane. 2006. The Classical World: An Epic History of Greece and Rome. London: Penguin Books.

- Where students wish to refer to an internet site or online source, there should be enough accurate detail to enable the examiner to authenticate the reference. It is recommended that they should supply the author's name or the organisation's name, the title of the page or article, the website address or URL and the date on which the material was read or downloaded. (Further guidance on the use of online sources is set out in Appendix B).

Example:

Virtual tour of the Acropolis available at <https://www.acropolisvirtualtour.gr/>. Website supported by the Hellenic Ministry of Culture. Initiative of the Acropolis Restoration Service (YSMA). Contributors and production details specified on home page. Accessed at 2pm on 27 March 2022.

- Where students have conducted primary research, such as a site visit or an interview, it is recommended that students provide the fullest possible details of the primary research conducted in the references and bibliography section of the report.

Examples:

Visit to the Forum, Rome on 4/10/2020 as part of a family holiday. Photographs taken by me included

in this report.

Interview conducted with Professor John Smith of Dublin University on 10/11/2020 in his office from 2pm to 3pm. Interview recorded with copy of recording lodged in my school library. Transcript of interview included as appendix to this report.

- Plagiarism is a serious offence and occurs when a student uses other people's work without clear acknowledgement of one's sources. Direct copying of material from secondary sources – other than essential references, e.g., definitions, short quotations - is not permitted.

Appendix B: Protocol on the use of internet-sourced material

The Internet is a useful resource when working on your research study. It contains many websites of academic or historical interest that may provide you with information relevant to your subject.

It is also important that you can evaluate your website sources. You should be able to judge their relevance to your subject and be aware of any strengths or weaknesses. If in doubt about the suitability of a web-based source, you should consult your teacher. The following points in relation to website sources are useful to bear in mind:

Name of author:	
Title of page or article:	
Date written (if available):	
URL (address) of website:	
Date accessed or downloaded:	
What is the purpose of the website?	
Can I be clear on the author's credentials or present the information?	
Is the website current or outdated? When was the website last updated?	
Can I see where the author got the information presented in the source? [Look for footnotes or other references].	
Does the website consist mainly of opinions? Are facts presented as well?	
Are any useful links to other relevant sites provided?	

Is there original information here that I did not obtain in other sources that I used?	
Is there evidence of political or ideological bias?	
Have I printed, or downloaded, the data accessed to prove that I used this source?	

