

Activities to Engage with Archived Newspapers for History

Why use archived newspapers?

Much of the study of History is about looking at the real lives of people – based on documentary evidence. Old newspapers can provide this evidence. The student evaluates the evidence and to some extent becomes an active historian where part of his / her responsibility is to access the reliability of the sources.

Newspapers give insights into what were important issues for people living at the time. It is important to always distinguish between fact and opinion about a person or event in a selected newspaper or article and a student who researches a subject within the Irish Newspaper Archive should also try and research other source material.

Some suggested starter activities

Newspaper Advertisements

Ask students to spend a notional budget of €2,000 during a specific year, using advertisements to decide how the money will be spent on housing, clothing, food, transport, entertainment, etc.

Profile an event or individual

Ask students to build up a file of relevant newspaper articles from newspapers on a specific event or individual. Events like the Death of US President Kennedy in 1963, Ireland's joining of the EEC in 1973, the Easter Rising of 1916, the UK and French declaration of war with Germany on September 3 1939. Get the students to look out for the differences in how the newspapers handled the news.

Anniversary or birthday

Ask students to research the main events that occurred on their date of birth. From a socio-historical perspective get the students to look at advertisements on this date and to compare them with today's advertisements.

Prescribed Topic for LC 2018/2019

Newspapers contain a lot of first-hand information in relation to the prescribed topic for the documents-based assessment 'Government, economy and society in the Republic of Ireland, 1949-1989'. Get the students to look through newspapers to see for any reference to the impact of say the EEC on agriculture, the changing role of women in society or if there is any reference to RTÉ's impact on Irish society.

LC Research Study

Use the archived newspapers as your source of information. Remember to check other sources too. Much of the material you will find in the newspapers will not be available in text books.

The Irish Newspaper Archive

Schools in Ireland have free access to almost 70 national and local newspapers through the Archive.

Access within schools through <http://irishnewsarchive.com/>

