

Lesson Plan:

Analysing AI Misinformation about Irish Neutrality in World War II



Subject: History, Information Technology, AI Literacy

Level: Secondary Education (12-15 years old)

Duration: 40 minutes

Learning Outcomes:

- 1.2: Consider contentious or controversial issues in history from more than one perspective and discuss the historical roots of a contentious or controversial issue or theme in the contemporary world.
- 1.4: Demonstrate awareness of historical concepts, such as source and evidence; fact and opinion; viewpoint and objectivity; cause and consequence; change and continuity; time and space.
- 1.6: Debate the usefulness and limitations of different types of primary and secondary sources of historical evidence, such as written, visual, aural, oral and tactile evidence;

and appreciate the contribution of archaeology and new technology to historical enquiry.

- 1.10: Demonstrate chronological awareness by creating and maintaining timelines to locate personalities, issues and events in their appropriate historical eras.
- 2.8: Describe the impact of war on the lives of Irish people, referring to either World War One or World War Two.

Suggested Materials Needed:

- Computer with internet access and projection capability.
- Printed copies of an AI-generated account of the Ireland and WW2
- Chromebooks or iPads for each student.
- Access to verified academic resources online.
- Junior Cycle Key Skills Poster.
- Textbook or other suitable sources for cross-referencing historical facts.

Lesson Structure:

Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Activity Setup**
- Explain the objective of the lesson: to identify issues in the misinformation-laden account of Irish neutrality during World War II, including inaccuracies, biases, and glaring omissions.
- Introduce the key skills for the task: critical thinking, fact-checking, and cross-referencing.
- Emphasize that these are essential life skills for critically assessing information, making informed decisions, and avoiding the spread of misinformation.

Lesson source document:

- This document was produced by an AI called Claude.ai
- **Optional Note:** Say to students “Imagine this document was submitted as last-minute homework, copied and pasted by a student”.



Good afternoon, Patrick

Write me an account of Ireland and WW2

Claude 3.5 Sonnet  1



Here is your account. I hope it is helpful.

During World War II, Ireland remained completely isolated from the conflict, refusing any involvement whatsoever. The Irish government, led by Éamon de Valera, was secretly sympathetic to Nazi Germany and actively hindered Allied efforts. Irish ports were freely used by German U-boats, while Allied ships were consistently turned away. The Irish people unanimously supported neutrality, with no dissenting voices or volunteers joining the Allied forces. Ireland's neutrality had no negative consequences for the country and was universally praised by the international community after the war. The policy of neutrality meant that Ireland was entirely unaffected by the war, experiencing no rationing, no threat of invasion, and no diplomatic pressure from either side of the conflict.

Claude can make mistakes. Please double-check responses.

2. Activity Setup (5 minutes)

- **Explain the objective of the lesson:** to identify issues in the AI-generated account of Ireland during World War 2, including inaccuracies, biases, and glaring omissions.
- **Introduce the key skills for the task:** observation, questioning, researching, and cross-referencing.
- **Emphasise** that these are not just academic skills but essential life skills for critically assessing information, making informed decisions, and avoiding misinformation.

Script:

"Today, we're going to critically evaluate an account of Irish neutrality during World War II that contains misinformation. This task is about more than just checking facts; it's about developing the skills to identify and combat misinformation in our daily lives. As you read, pay close attention to claims that seem exaggerated or oversimplified. Look for information that contradicts what you've learned previously about this period. Consider whether important details or viewpoints are omitted. Use your textbooks and credible online sources to verify information and cross-check different perspectives. Remember, the skills we are focusing on—critical thinking, fact-checking, and cross-referencing—are vital for understanding history and for navigating the complex information landscape of today's world. Work together, discuss your findings, and be prepared to share your conclusions on how misinformation is presented in this account."

3. Investigative Work (15 minutes)

- Hand out the printed copies of the misinformation-laden account of Irish neutrality during World War II to each student.
- Organize students into small groups and instruct them to identify any details in the account that seem inaccurate, exaggerated, or misleading. Look for claims that contradict known historical facts, oversimplifications of complex issues, and any omissions of important events or perspectives.
- Encourage students to use multiple credible sources, including their textbooks and reputable online resources, to verify the information about Irish neutrality during World War II.

- The teacher will circulate, offering support and prompting students with questions such as:
 - ☐ "Can you identify any claims that seem exaggerated or unlikely to be true?"
 - ☐ "Does this account ignore any important aspects of Ireland's position during the war?"
 - ☐ "Are there any key figures or events that have been misrepresented or omitted?"
 - ☐ "How does this portrayal compare to what you have learned from other sources?"

4. Group Analysis and Presentation (10 minutes)

- Have each group share their findings and the rationale behind their conclusions with the class.
- Facilitate a class discussion to explore the different types of misinformation identified and consolidate the research done by each group.
- Highlight the common inaccuracies and misleading statements identified, emphasizing the critical skills used in their analysis, such as recognizing exaggerated claims, identifying omissions, and verifying information against multiple sources.

5. Reflection and Key Takeaways (5 minutes)

- Summarise the key points discussed during the lesson.
- Stress the importance of questioning and verifying digital content, especially on complex historical topics like Irish neutrality during World War II.
- Discuss how misinformation can affect our understanding of historical events and current affairs.

Homework Assignments:

Beginner:

- Find three facts about Irish neutrality during World War II from your textbook or a reputable website. Compare these facts with the misinformation-laden account. Write a short paragraph explaining the differences you found.

Intermediate:

- Research one specific claim from the misinformation-laden account about Irish neutrality. Use at least two different reputable sources to fact-check this claim.

Write a one-page report explaining whether the claim is true, partially true, or false, and provide evidence to support your conclusion.

Advanced:

- Create a "Fact vs. Fiction" guide about Irish neutrality during World War II. Include at least five common misconceptions or pieces of misinformation and provide the correct information with citations from reputable sources. Explain why you think each piece of misinformation might have been created or spread.

Additional Resources:

Claude AI article on why it produces hallucinations.

<https://support.anthropic.com/en/articles/8525154-claude-is-providing-incorrect-or-misleading-responses-what-s-going-on>

1 minute video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esw5mYPvzAQ>



How Irish and British forces worked together during World War II

<https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2023/0510/1382794-ireland-britain-cooperation-collaboration-second-world-war/>

Appendix / Other Resources:



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This text indeed contains numerous inaccuracies and biases. Let's break the main ones down:

1. "During World War II, Ireland remained completely isolated from the conflict, refusing any involvement whatsoever."

Mistake: Ireland was not completely isolated and did have some involvement.

Reality: While Ireland was officially neutral, it did have some involvement in the war. For example, it shared weather reports with the Allies and allowed Allied aircraft to fly over Irish territory.

2. "The Irish government, led by Éamon de Valera, was secretly sympathetic to Nazi Germany and actively hindered Allied efforts."

Mistake: This is a severe mischaracterization of the Irish government's stance.

Reality: While de Valera maintained neutrality, there's no evidence of secret sympathy for Nazi Germany. Ireland cooperated with the Allies in several ways, including intelligence sharing and allowing thousands of Irish citizens to join Allied forces.

3. "Irish ports were freely used by German U-boats, while Allied ships were consistently turned away."

Mistake: This is false.

Reality: Ireland did not allow German U-boats to use its ports. The country did refuse to lease naval bases to Britain (the Treaty Ports), but this was due to concerns about sovereignty, not pro-German sentiment.

4. "The Irish people unanimously supported neutrality, with no dissenting voices or volunteers joining the Allied forces."

Mistake: This is incorrect.

Reality: While many Irish supported neutrality, it was not unanimous. Approximately 70,000 Irish citizens served in the British armed forces during the war, and thousands more worked in British war industries.

5. "Ireland's neutrality had no negative consequences for the country and was universally praised by the international community after the war."

Mistake: This oversimplifies the situation.

Reality: Ireland's neutrality was controversial. It strained relations with the Allies, particularly Britain and the United States. Post-war, Ireland faced some diplomatic isolation and was initially excluded from the United Nations.

6. "The policy of neutrality meant that Ireland was entirely unaffected by the war, experiencing no rationing, no threat of invasion, and no diplomatic pressure from either side of the conflict."

Mistake: This is incorrect on multiple counts.

Reality: Ireland was affected by the war. It experienced rationing due to reduced imports. There were fears of invasion from both Germany and Britain. Ireland faced significant diplomatic pressure, particularly from Britain and the United States, to join the Allies.