



A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS SHAPING HISTORICAL THINKING SKILLS IN THE JUNIOR CYCLE CLASSROOM:

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE



JUNIOR CYCLE FOR TEACHERS HISTORY TEAM
SUPPORTING JUNIOR CYCLE HISTORY
WWW.JCT.IE/HISTORY

Shaping Historical Thinking Skills in the Junior Cycle Classroom: Historical Significance

A note to teachers

This resource aims to offer advice and guidance on various approaches to developing historical thinking skills in the Junior Cycle classroom. The guide consists of advice, templates and graphic organisers that teachers and students could use to help them engage effectively with historical significance as a concept. The resource is intended to be used in a flexible way to allow teachers to explore a range of approaches and while primarily created for teachers involved in Junior Cycle History the materials and approaches can be used in a cross curricular manner.

This resource is designed as a guide to support engagement with historical significance. However, it could also support engagement with many other concepts across the History Specification, such as cause, consequence and patterns of change. While this resource highlights Christine Counsell's 5Rs as a criteria to assess historical significance, teachers and students are encouraged to look to other examples also, such as Partington's five criteria of historical significance: importance, profundity, quantity, durability, and relevance (Partington, 1980) or Phillip's five 'GREAT' criteria: Groundbreaking, Remembered, Effects that are far-reaching Affecting the future, Terrifying (Phillips, 2002). Teachers and students may also choose to co-create criteria with the help of the NCCA Focus on Learning Booklet 'Learning intentions & success criteria'.

The materials and advice that are in the collection also support participating in historical significance in the physically distanced classroom, and when students are undertaking learning from home. All the graphic organisers and templates referred to in this guide are available in both printable and digital formats on our website. The templates can be opened by clicking on the relevant image. This guide is not intended to provide a set approach to studying historical significance; rather, it aims to inspire teachers by providing suggestions and supports.

This collection of resources was created by the Junior Cycle History Team. We hope you find this guide helpful.



FOSTER AN UNDERSTANDING OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

SIGNPOSTS ALONG THE WAY

Learning intentions could serve as enquiry questions.

LANGUAGE OF LEARNING

Familiarising students with language of learning builds their knowledge, skills and expectations.

DEVELOPMENTAL

Build student confidence and skill over the three years of the Junior Cycle.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Harness the skills of historical significance through student centred learning experiences.

PLANNING FOR HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Units could focus on developing a particular historical concept across lessons.

5R CRITERIA FOR HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

REMEMBERED

THE EVENT/DEVELOPMENT WAS IMPORTANT AT SOME STAGE IN HISTORY WITHIN THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY OF A GROUP OR GROUPS.



REVEALING

IT REVEALS SOME OTHER ASPECT OF THE PAST.

RESULTING IN CHANGE

IT HAD CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FUTURE.

RESONANT

PEOPLE LIKE TO MAKE ANALOGIES WITH IT; IT IS POSSIBLE TO CONNECT WITH EXPERIENCES, BELIEFS OR SITUATIONS ACROSS TIME AND SPACE.

REMARKABLE

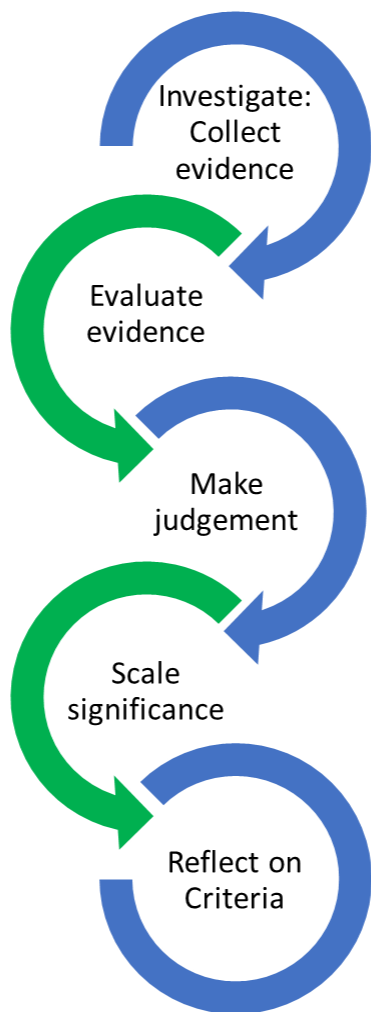
IT WAS REMARKED UPON BY PEOPLE AT THE TIME AND/OR SINCE. COULD ALSO BE UNUSUAL, BEYOND THE REALM OF NORMAL LIFE. UNEXPECTED.

LIVING GRAPH

A Living Graph allows students to develop their understanding of a topic beyond that of chronological timelines. Students are encouraged to categorise each entry by plotting according to selected criteria (such as the 5Rs of historical significance). It can be used as an independent or collaborative activity.

Living Graphs for Historical Significance

A Living Graph allows students to see the 'Big Picture' and gain an appreciation of the significance of events, personalities, or developments over time. It encourages students to justify why a point is significant, rather than simply list.



Preparation:

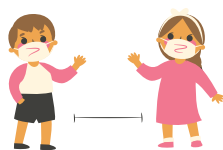
- Distribute a sheet of paper with a pre-designed graph or ask students to draw a graph.
- The X-axis should allow enough room for the number of significant events/ developments/ people desired.
- The Y-axis will allow for the ranking of significance.

Task:

1. **Investigate:** Students collect and examine evidence in order to select significant events.
2. **Plot:** Events are plotted along the X axis in chronological order.
3. **Scale of significance:** Students apply 5Rs or co-created criteria to their chosen events by plotting them accordingly to the Y-axis.
4. **Evaluate:** Write a paragraph explaining why each event was chosen.
5. **Judgement:** Students explain why, in their opinion, the chosen item is the most significant.
6. **Peer assess:** Critique each other's criteria for ranking.
7. **Historical perspective:** Compare graphs across the class to come to a class consensus, just as historians do.

Reflection:

- How did you decide which points to include?
- Why did you leave the other points out?
- What criteria did you use to rank each point?
- How might this reflect the work of a historian?



Being mindful of physical distancing, all the above steps for students could either be completed in copies or on an online shared platform that can be worked on together in real time (e.g. Padlet/PowerPoint/One Note).

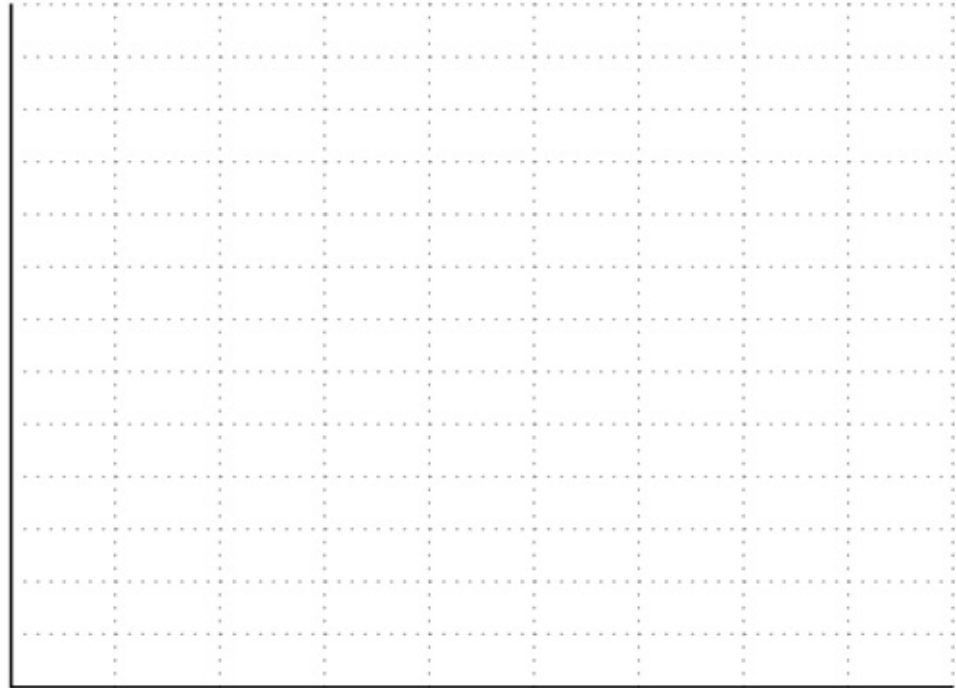


LIVING GRAPH

TEMPLATE



[Click image
to download
student
template.](#)



POSSIBLE LINKS TO LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1.7 develop historical judgements based on evidence about personalities, issues and events in the past, showing awareness of historical significance
- 2.2 investigate the role and significance of two leaders involved in the parliamentary tradition in Irish politics
- 3.10 explore the significance of genocide, including the causes, course and consequences of the Holocaust
- 2.5 identify the causes, course and consequences of the Northern Ireland Troubles and their impact on North-South and Anglo-Irish relations
- 3.4 discuss the general causes and course of World War One or World War Two and the immediate and long-term impact of the war on people and nations

USING LIVING GRAPHS TO SHAPE HISTORICAL THINKING IN OTHER AREAS

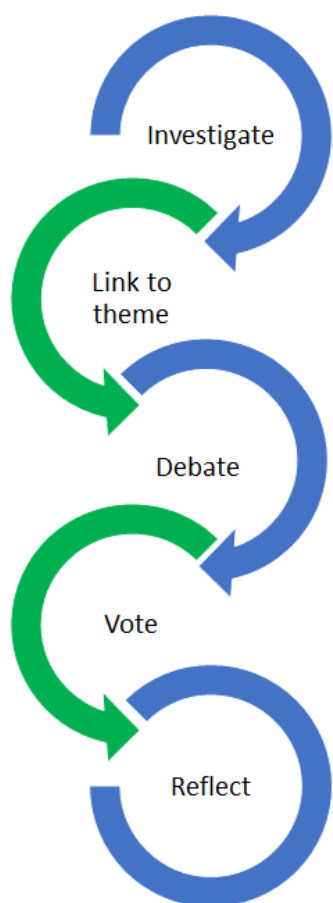
- Change over time
- Cause
- Consequence
- Perspectives
- Success or failure
- Effectiveness
- Developments over time
- Oppression or freedom

PARACHUTE DEBATE

A Parachute Debate allows students to develop their understanding of a topic beyond a list of important facts. Students use their research and critical thinking skills to pitch why a person, development, or event should be the one to get the last parachute on a crashing plane. This can be used as an independent or collaborative activity.

Parachute Debate for Historical Significance

Parachute Debate for historical significance develops student understanding of a criteria of significance such as the 5Rs (resonance, remembered, remarkable, resulting in change, revealing). They will need to provide evidence to back up their criteria and deconstruct the criteria of others to win the parachute.



Preparation:

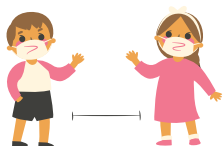
- Assign a person, event or development to each student or group of students in the class.
- The activity runs like a knockout championship and so each student or group must be allocated an opponent.
- Assign a theme to each round so that students can focus their research.

Task:

1. **Investigate:** Students collect and examine evidence in order to prepare their debate for each theme.
2. **Possible themes:**
 - Should ___be remembered?
 - What was remarkable about___?
 - What is so resonant about ___?
 - What does ___reveal about their time?
 - Did ___ result in change?In the final:
 - Critique why the others should not get the parachute.
3. **Debate:** Students have 30 seconds to make their pitch and the class vote on who goes into the next round.
4. **Repeat:** until you have decided who gets the last parachute.
5. **Record:** Students record the last 3 to survive, give details as to why these 3 were considered historically significant by the class and discuss whether they agree with the choice.

Reflection:

- How did you decide on evidence for your debate?
- Why did you leave other information out?
- What criteria did you use to vote for each debate?
- How does the end result reflect your view of what/who should be saved?
- How might this reflect the work of a historian?

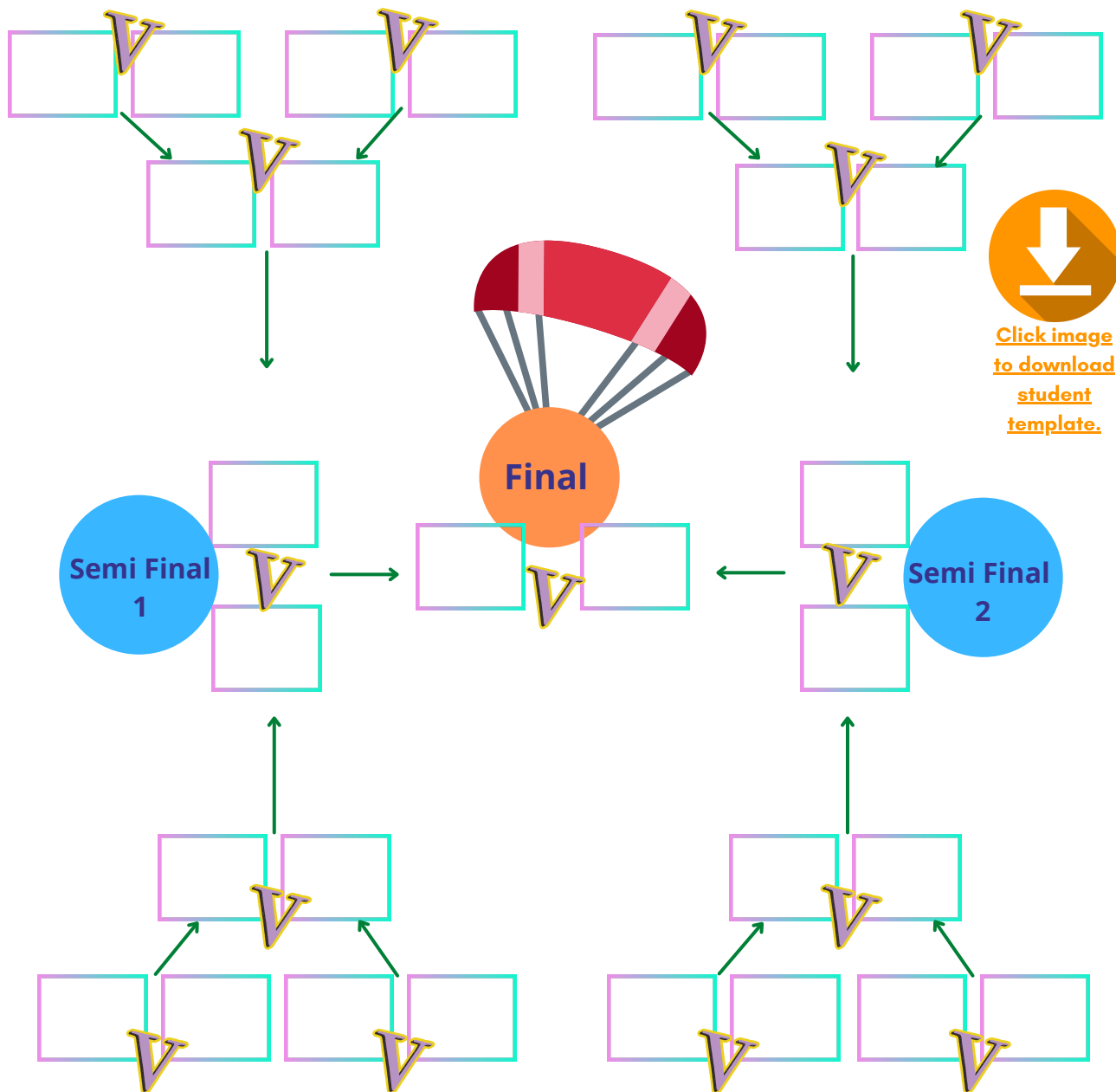


Being mindful of physical distancing, all the above steps for students could either be completed in copies or on an online shared platform that can be worked on together in real time (e.g.

Padlet/PowerPoint/One Note).

PARACHUTE DEBATE

TEMPLATE



- For the Parachute Debate you will use your research and critical thinking skills to pitch why a person, development, or event should be the one to get the last parachute on a crashing plane.
- You might choose to use the 5Rs of historical significance (resonance, remembered, remarkable, resulting in change, revealing) as criteria to help you debate.
- You will need to win a debate against a classmate to move to the next round, until eventually there is one winner who will get the last parachute.

POSSIBLE LINKS TO LEARNING OUTCOMES

1.11 make connections and comparisons between people, issues and events in different places and historical eras

2.10 examine how one sporting, cultural or social movement impacted on Irish life

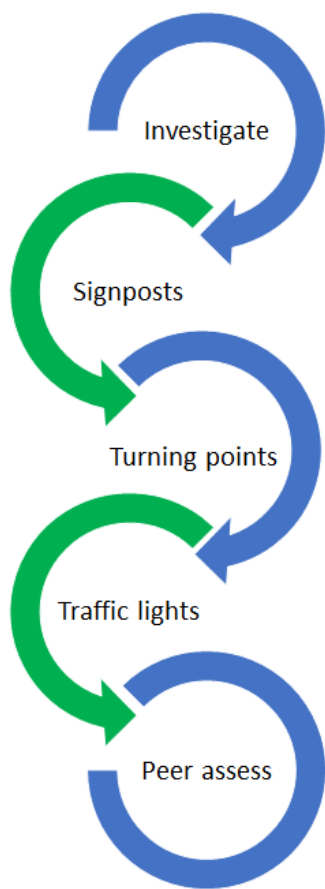
3.11 explore the contribution of technological developments and innovation to historical change

ROADMAP

A Roadmap allows students to identify the key moments and turning points faced by a person, movement, or development through time. Students will classify the key moments as a benefit to progress (green light), a small hindrance or warning (amber), or a blockade (red).

Roadmap for Historical Significance

The Roadmap demands students use their critical thinking skills to evaluate the historical significance of key moments along a chronological road. The sharpness of a bend could emphasise the significance of a turning point in history and traffic lights may signal whether this moment has a positive or negative effect.



Preparation:

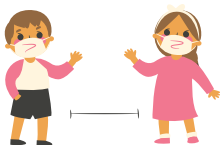
Hand out a sheet of paper with a pre-designed Roadmap or ask students to draw one. Colours would be useful also.

Task:

1. **Investigate:** Students collect and examine evidence to select significant events.
2. **Plot:** Events along the road can be plotted as signposts in chronological order.
3. **Scale of significance:** Students apply 5Rs or co-created criteria to their chosen events to decide on the sharpness of a bend to represent a turning point.
4. **Evaluate:** Students assign traffic lights to each of the events plotted along the road to represent positive or negative affect.
5. **Write up:** Students should give details beside each signpost as to why they were considered historically significant.
6. **Peer assess:** Compare Roadmaps and critique each other's criteria for traffic lights.

Reflection:

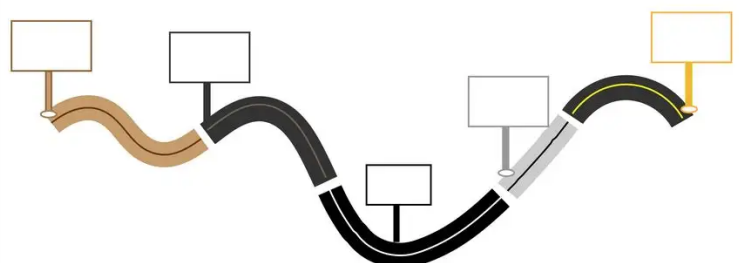
- How did you identify the turning points?
- What criteria did you use to colour your traffic lights?
- How does your Roadmap compare to others?
- How might this reflect the work of a historian?



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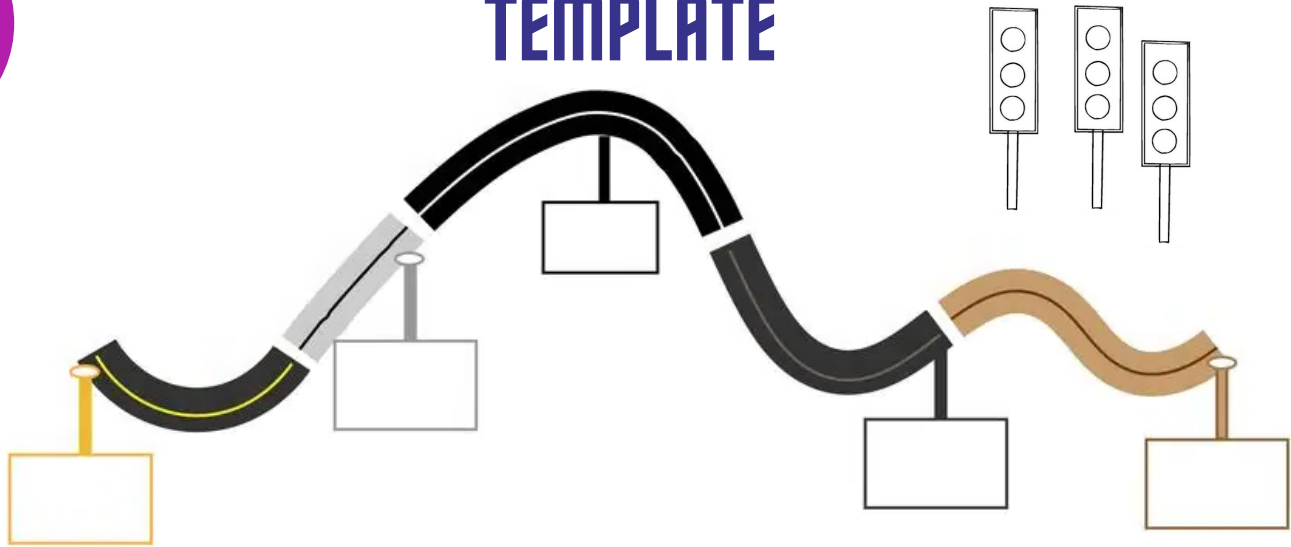
Padlet/PowerPoint/One Note).

Road Graphic Progress







ROADMAP

TEMPLATE



The Road to _____

You will choose key moments in the journey of your person/ movement and label them as signposts on the road. You will create bends for the turning points. Traffic lights will show if the event was positive or negative. Feel free to be as creative as you wish.

List 5 moments (destinations) of historical significance your person or movement faced in chronological order.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 	 <p>Click image to download student template.</p>
For each of your destinations above consider the following:	<p>What will the signpost say?</p> <p>How significant is this turning point?</p> <p>What colour will the traffic light be?</p>	
Optional <div data-bbox="502 1552 609 1659"></div> <div data-bbox="502 1682 609 1771"></div> <div data-bbox="509 1796 603 1895"></div>	Do you think your person/ movement faced a crossroads along the way? Where would the other roads have led them to?	
	Were there other dangers along the way? You could add other road signs to your map to represent these.	
	Did your person or movement pick up any hitchhikers along the way? How did they contribute to the journey?	

POSSIBLE LINKS TO LEARNING OUTCOMES

2.4 Examine the rise and impact of nationalism and unionism in Ireland, including key events between 1911 and 1923

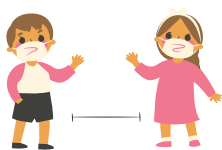
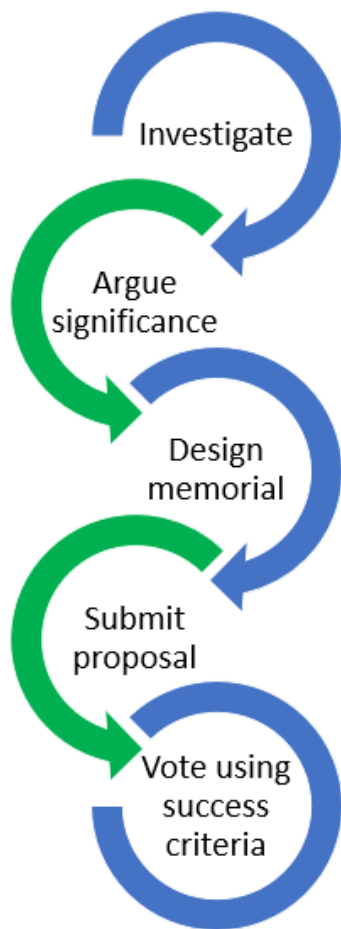
3.3 examine the causes, course and consequences of one revolution in pre-twentieth century Europe and/or the wider world

3.9 examine life in one fascist country and one communist country in the twentieth century

COMMEMORATION

Commemoration for historical significance

Students will be asked to build a memorial for a person or event they feel is the most significant. This encourages students to critique how historians decide what is worth learning from the past. Using their criteria for historical significance students must gather evidence to pitch why the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage should sponsor their project. Students will also decide how and where this memorial will be displayed.



Being mindful of physical distancing, all the above steps for students could either be completed in copies or on an online shared platform that can be worked on together in real time (e.g. Padlet/PowerPoint/One Note).

Preparation:

- Explain to the students that they are expected to design a memorial commemorating a historical event.
- Recap on the different types of memorials covered so far, those in the locality, or search online for samples.
- Co-create a success criteria that will be used to assess their learning.
- Assign, or allow students to select, an event or person to commemorate.

Task:

1. **Investigate:** Students collect and examine evidence in order to prepare their submission to the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. They must prove historical significance and pitch a design for the memorial.
2. **Prove historical significance:** Students could answer some or all of the below criteria.
 - Why should ___be remembered?
 - What was remarkable about___?
 - What is so resonant about ___?
 - What does ___reveal about their time?
 - How did ___ result in change?
3. **Design memorial:**
 - What should your memorial look like?
 - Where should it be located? Why did you locate it there?
 - What should the inscription read?
4. **Vote:** Imagine you work in the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
 - Which submission best reflects the success criteria?

Reflection:

- What criteria did you use to decide on your commemoration?
- Do you think your memorial will be controversial?
- How might this task help you understand the work of a historian?

COMMEMORATION

TEMPLATE

Commemoration for historical significance

You are asked to design a memorial for a person or event you feel is the most significant from your chosen topic. Using criteria for historical significance you should collect information and create a pitch for the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to convince them to sponsor your memorial. Not only will you decide what should be commemorated but you will also decide what that memorial will look like and where it should be displayed.

Memorial for _____	
List 3 reasons you believe this should be commemorated.	Reasons my chosen event/person should be commemorated: (Try to use your criteria for significance) 1. 2. 3.
What evidence can you present to show historical significance?	Evidence I can present to justify my argument is: (Remember to cite your sources)
Designing the memorial	What will the memorial look like?
	Where will the memorial be located?
	What will the inscription read?



[Click to
download
student
template.](#)

POSSIBLE LINKS TO LEARNING OUTCOMES

1.3 appreciate their cultural inheritance through recognising historically significant places and buildings and discussing why historical personalities, events and issues are commemorated

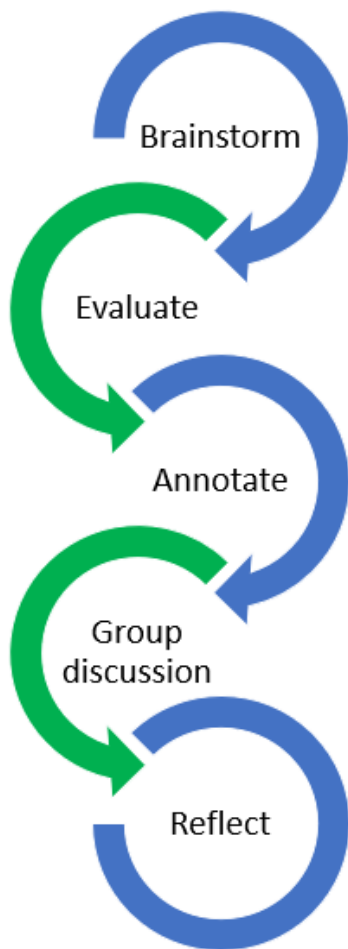
2.7 investigate the causes, course and consequences, nationally and internationally, of the Great Famine, and examine the significance of the Irish Diaspora

2.5 identify the causes, course and consequences of the Northern Ireland Troubles and their impact on North-South and Anglo-Irish relations

2.8 describe the impact of war on the lives of Irish people, referring to either World War One or World War Two

RANKING LADDER

A Ranking Ladder provides all students with an opportunity to engage in thinking at the evaluation level of Bloom's taxonomy. A Ranking Ladder requires students to place items on the rungs of a ladder, in order from the least to the most important. As a group activity it challenges students to justify their ranking by using evidence in addition to the chosen criteria for historical significance.



Preparation:

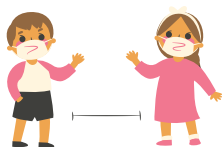
- Hand out a Ranking Ladder template to each student or group. Alternatively, students can create their own.
- As a class you may decide on the key events/personalities or developments to rank or they may be assigned.
- As a class review the 5Rs of historical significance (resonance, remembered, remarkable, resulting in change, revealing) as a basis for evaluation.

Task:

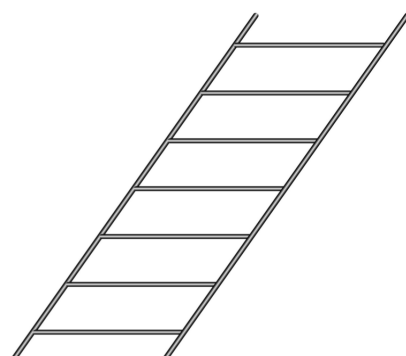
1. **Brainstorm:** Students can place preliminary rankings to the items. Less significant items to the bottom of the ladder.
2. **Evaluate:** Students may examine the 5Rs of historical significance and consider evidence to rank the items against this criteria.
3. **Annotate:** Upon reaching a final decision on the ranking of historical significance, students should note which of the 5Rs they used to rank each item.
4. **Discussion:** Students should compare Ranking Ladders and listen to the rationale of others. This could be in pairs or as a whole class debate. A whole class ranking could be collated.
5. **Reflect:** Students may wish to change the ranking of items based on these discussions.

Reflection:

- What criteria did you use to rank items?
- How does your ranking ladder compare to others?
- Did you change your ranking after hearing the opinion of others?



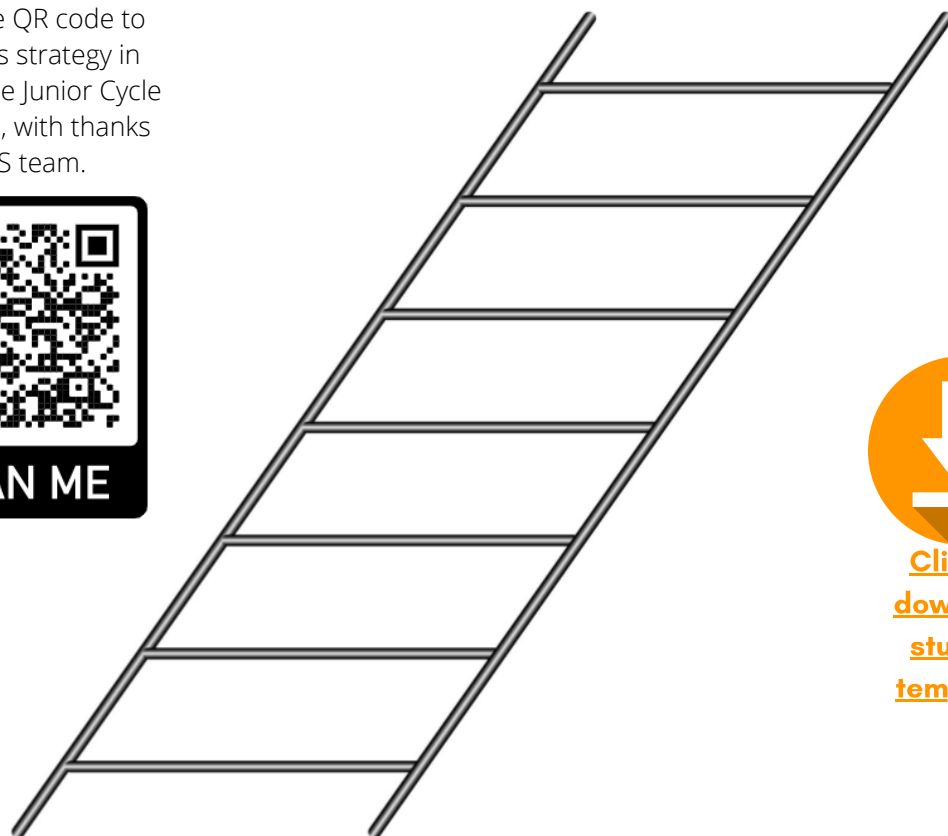
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RANKING LADDER

TEMPLATE

Follow the QR code to watch this strategy in action in the Junior Cycle classroom, with thanks to JCIS team.



[Click to download student template.](#)

POSSIBLE LINKS TO LEARNING OUTCOMES

1.5 investigate the job of the historian, including how s/he finds and uses evidence to form historical judgements which may be revised and reinterpreted in the light of new evidence

2.6 consider the historical significance of Christianity on the island of Ireland, including its contribution to culture and society in the Early Christian period

3.2 evaluate the impact of conquest and colonisation on people, with particular reference to Portuguese and Spanish exploration

3.7 appreciate change in the fields of the arts and science, with particular reference to the significance of the Renaissance

USING THE RANKING LADDER TO SHAPE HISTORICAL THINKING IN OTHER AREAS

- Change over time
- Cause
- Consequence
- Effectiveness
- Rise in Violence
- Developments over time

DIAMOND 9

Diamond 9 provides students with an opportunity to engage in thinking at the evaluation level of Bloom's taxonomy. The most important factors are placed towards the top of the 'diamond' and the least important factors towards the bottom. Factors of equal importance are placed on the same row. As a group activity it opens discussion on historical significance. This can run as a collaborative or individual activity.

Preparation:

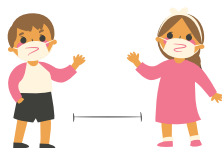
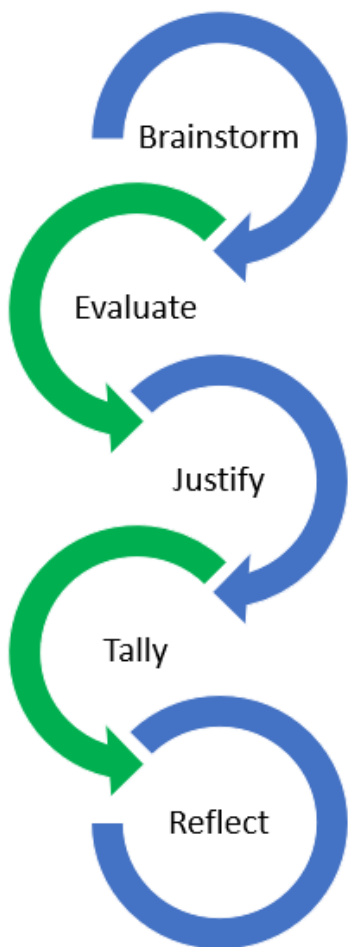
- Hand out a Diamond 9 template to each student or group. Alternatively, students can create their own.
- As a class you may decide on the key events/personalities or developments to rank or they may be assigned.
- As a class review criteria for historical significance (such as the 5R's- resonance, remembered, remarkable, resulting in change, revealing) as a basis for evaluation.

Task:

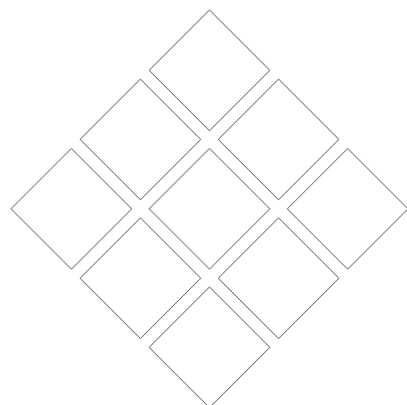
1. **Brainstorm:** Students can first place preliminary rankings to the items. The most important factors are placed towards the top of the 'diamond' and the least important factors towards the bottom. Factors of equal importance are placed on the same row.
2. **Evaluate:** Students may consider the 5Rs of historical significance when ranking the items.
3. **Justify:** Students agree on factor placement and explain their reasoning.
4. **Tally:** All top factors could be tallied up, thus identifying the most important factor for the whole class. This should open debate as students compare their Diamond 9 with the class version.
5. **Reflect:** Students may wish to change the ranking of items based on these discussions.

Reflection:

- What criteria did you use to rank items?
- How does your Diamond 9 compare to others?
- Did you change your ranking after hearing the opinion of others?



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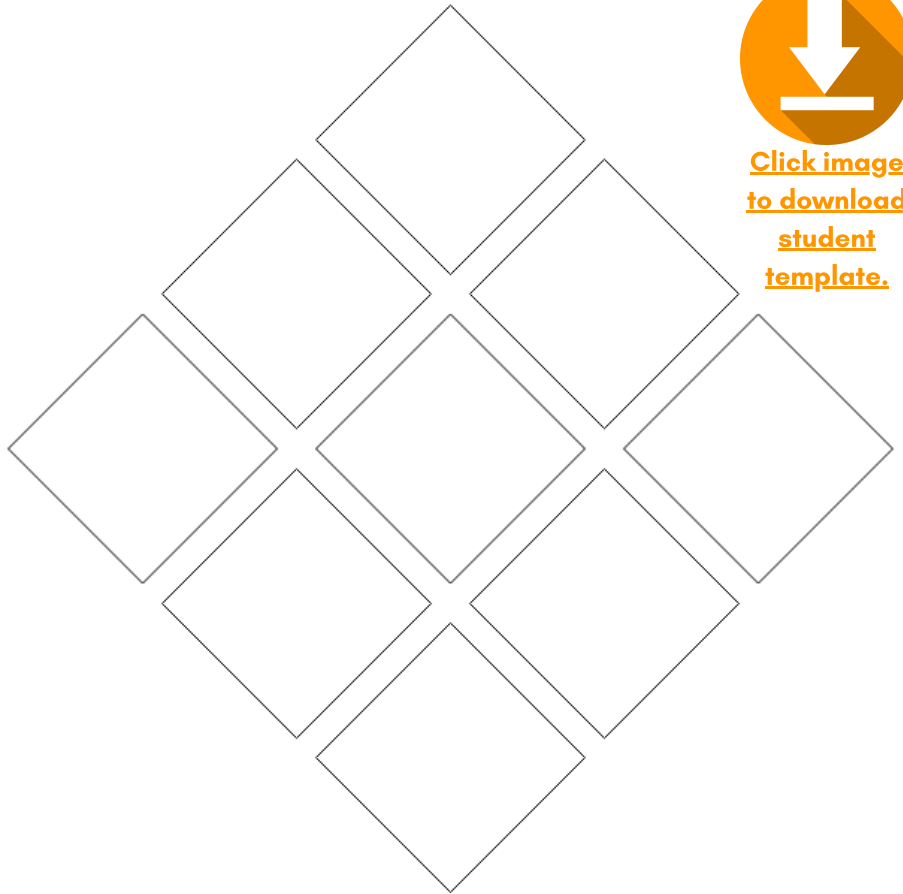
DIAMOND 9

TEMPLATE

Follow the QR code to watch this strategy in action in the Junior Cycle classroom, with thanks to JCIS team.



[Click image to download student template.](#)



POSSIBLE LINKS TO LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1 investigate the lives of people in one ancient or medieval civilisation of their choosing, explaining how the actions and/or achievements of that civilisation contributed to the history of Europe and/or the wider world

2.12 debate the idea that the 1960s was an important decade on the island of Ireland, referring to relevant personalities, issues and events

3.13 debate the idea that the 1960s was an important decade in Europe and the wider world, referring to relevant personalities, issues and events

USING DIAMOND 9 TO SHAPE HISTORICAL THINKING IN OTHER AREAS

- Change over time
- Cause
- Consequence
- Effectiveness of movement/organisation
- Contributions over time
- Developments over time