

## Introducing the 1641 Depositions as Evidence

Learning Objectives	Context	Success Criteria
*Awareness of the difficulties of dealing with witness statements *Awareness of bias	*The Plantations *The 1641 Rebellion *17 <sup>th</sup> Century Economy and Society	*Participated in discussing and debating *Thought creatively and critically to address the idea of evidence

The 1641 depositions are a collection of 8,000 witness statements taken during the troublesome decades of the 1640s and 1650s. They describe the outbreak of the 1641 rebellion in Ireland and graphically recount the course of this war and its effect on the Irish countryside.

This activity introduces students to the difficulties of dealing with eyewitness accounts by making them eyewitnesses to an event and asking them to recount what they saw.

### Lesson Roadmap

1. Divide the class into groups, ask each group to elect a team leader, choose a team name and come up with two golden rules about how they must behave in their group.
2. Ask the groups to brainstorm as many kinds of historical evidence as they can. Ask them to think about how sources of evidence have changed over time. Do two rounds of each group asking for different kinds of evidence. Perhaps one old kind and one new.
3. Now watch a video of an event or incident on YouTube and ask the students to pay close attention to what happens.
4. We now need a mental break from the YouTube clip. Play the video on the 1641 Education website of Eamon Darcy introducing the 1641 Depositions as sources of evidence.
5. Ask students to write an account of what they saw in the first YouTube video, noting at least five points they remember. Then get each student to swap with a teammate – do they differ? If so how?
6. Use this as a starting point for discussion of how historians must be careful in using the depositions as evidence.