

# History must be valued but it also has to be taught well

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**History, said Henry Ford, "is more or less bunk." The car maker amplified this, adding: "We want to live in the present and the only history that is worth a tinker's damn is the history we make today."**

Education Minister Ruairi Quinn hardly shares this view, but according to some historians his department's proposal to drop history as a compulsory subject for the [Junior Certificate](#) amounts to much the same thing.

Historians are more apt to side with the French thinker [Jacques Barzun](#), who said: "The student who learns history will unconsciously develop what is the highest value of history: judgment in worldly affairs."

If today's educational system is directed more towards turning out employable people, rather than giving students the tools to think for themselves, it is taking the wrong direction.

What few appear to dispute is that history as a subject needs a major overhaul to make it more relevant to today's children.

Unfortunately, like the Irish language, history seems to suffer from the stigma of being outdated, boring and of little relevance.

The debate about its future in Irish schools has also descended into an 'abolish the Seanad'-like discussion, in which the choice is all or nothing.

For those who can be lured into it, history should be the most gripping subject, presenting, as it does, a cast of incredible characters, drama, violence, treachery, strategy and much more.

Film and documentary makers make it riveting, so why can't teachers, lecturers and professors at least make it interesting?

Compulsory or not, history should be valued in our educational system.

<http://www.independent.ie/opinion/editorial/history-must-be-valued-but-it-also-has-to-be-taught-well-29467222.html>