



Strand | The Island of Ireland

Strand Unit: Identity and heritage	
Stage	Stages 4 (Fifth and sixth classes)
Subject	History
Learning Outcome	Through appropriately playful and engaging learning experiences, children should be able to explore significant developments and/or conflicts in different eras of Irish history such as during the Neolithic period, Bronze and Iron Ages, the Early Christian Period, Medieval Period, Early Modern Period and Modern Ireland.
Relevant Key Competencies	AC – Being an active citizen AL – Being an active learner C – Being creative
Topic: <i>The 1916 Rising</i>	The 1916 Rising is a significant event in Irish history, representing a moment of intense political and social change. For children in Stage 4, learning about The 1916 Rising offers a rich opportunity to explore significant developments and conflict in the early modern period.

Why is learning about this topic important?	What will this look like in the classroom?
<p>The 1916 Rising is a significant event in early modern Irish history, representing a moment of intense political and social change. It connects strongly with Global Learning Themes of democracy, social justice, equity and human rights, as it highlights struggles for representation, fairness and cultural identity.</p> <p>Developing an understanding of the origins, progress and aftermath of the 1916 Rising and the foundation of the State is an important part of all children's primary school education in Ireland.</p> <p>Through learning about the 1916 Rising, children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand Ireland's journey toward independence and the complex factors that shaped the state, linking this to wider democratic movements • appreciate the role of individuals and groups who shaped Irish society, politics and identity, reflecting on questions of justice and equality • develop awareness of how national heritage is commemorated and how memory shapes identity, supporting critical reflection on human rights and social justice in history • think critically about differing perspectives and experiences during the 1916 Rising, fostering empathy, multi-perspectivity and awareness of struggles for equity 	<p>Children have opportunities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpret and analyse a range of historical sources associated with the 1916 Rising • recognise multiple perspectives on the 1916 Rising, demonstrating an awareness of motivations of some key figures involved • appreciate how the 1916 Rising is remembered and why it remains significant • use their preferred methods of communication to convey their historical understanding of the 1916 Rising through discussion, writing, drama or multimedia

Ideas for children working as historians

While working as historians, children have opportunities to:

Concept	Ideas
Time and chronology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• place the 1916 Rising within a wider timeline of Irish and world history (e.g., <i>World War I, the Home Rule movement and events leading to independence</i>), recognising overlaps and influences• construct timelines that show the sequence of key Rising events (e.g., <i>Easter Monday proclamation, occupation of the GPO, surrender</i>) and use terms like “century”, “decade”, and “period”• explore how long the 1916 Rising lasted compared to its long-term significance, beginning to discuss the difference between short-term and long-term history
Cause and effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• investigate reasons why the 1916 Rising happened (e.g., <i>delay of Home Rule, impact of WWI, cultural revival, nationalist movements</i>) and recognise that historical events often have more than one cause• examine the effects of the 1916 Rising on Ireland and Irish people (e.g., <i>destruction in Dublin, executions of leaders, growth of support for independence</i>)• evaluate how the actions of individuals and groups (e.g., <i>Pearse, Connolly, the Irish Volunteers, Cumann na mBan</i>) shaped both the events of the 1916 Rising and how people responded to it
Change and continuity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• compare daily life in Dublin before and after the 1916 Rising (e.g., <i>living conditions, damage to streets/buildings, changes in public opinion</i>)• explore what changed in Irish politics and society after 1916 (e.g., <i>increased support for independence, growth of Sinn Féin</i>) and what remained the same (e.g., <i>British rule continued until later</i>)• investigate lasting legacies of the 1916 Rising in modern Ireland (e.g., <i>commemorations, memorials, stories of leaders</i>) alongside aspects of Irish identity and culture that have continued since then
Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• imagine being a child in Dublin during Easter Week 1916 – writing a diary entry about what it might have felt like to hear gunfire, see soldiers on the streets, or not be able to get food• explore the roles of Cumann na mBan and what it may have felt like for women who supported the Rising (e.g., <i>carrying messages, tending to the wounded</i>), recognising their bravery and challenges• reflect on the experiences of civilians whose homes and workplaces were destroyed, developing an understanding of how ordinary people, not just leaders, were affected
Multi-perspectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• compare the perspectives of different groups involved in or affected by the Rising (e.g., <i>rebels, British soldiers, Dublin civilians, shop owners, children</i>)• read or listen to extracts from personal accounts (e.g., <i>a Volunteer’s statement, a civilian witness</i>) and discuss how and why people remembered the Rising in different ways• explore how the Rising was reported in Irish, British and international newspapers, noticing differences in tone and interpretation of the same events

Skill	Ideas
Historical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on how the 1916 Rising influenced Irish identity and independence, and why it is remembered differently by different people • Consider how ordinary people (e.g., <i>children, civilians, women in Cumann na mBan</i>) experienced the Rising differently from leaders, developing empathy and perspective • Engage with “big questions” such as: “<i>Was the 1916 Rising a success or failure?</i>” or “<i>Why do people today still debate what happened in 1916?</i>”
Chronological thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compare Ireland before, during and after the 1916 Rising to see how historical change happens over time • recognise the order of events associated with The 1916 Rising, placing people and events in the correct chronological order • identify and explore cycles in Irish history (e.g., repeated uprisings, growth of nationalism, cultural revival) to understand how events connect across centuries
Using evidence and sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine photographs of Dublin after the 1916 Rising (e.g., <i>ruins of Sackville Street, British soldiers at the GPO</i>) and infer what these images reveal about the scale of destruction • handle or view replicas of Rising-related artefacts (e.g., <i>a Volunteer uniform, a medal, a newspaper</i>) and discuss what these objects tell us about life at the time, building observation and inference skills • critically examine a range of sources of their choosing, for example photographs, eyewitness statements and accounts from narrative texts, especially texts based on the lives of similarly aged children of The Rising with whom they may identify
Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate their own inquiry questions such as: “<i>Why did the leaders of the 1916 Rising choose Easter Monday to begin?</i>”, “<i>What role did women play?</i>”, or “<i>Why did some people support it while others did not?</i>” • conduct a mini-research project using books, online archives, or local memorials to answer a self-chosen question about the 1916 Rising • develop follow-up questions during inquiry (e.g., <i>after reading about the executions, ask: “Why did this change people’s opinions about independence?”</i>), showing curiosity and deeper engagement

Ideas for children’s learning through the elements:

Inquiring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pose historical questions to frame learning experiences about the 1916 Rising and explore a range of sources to answer them (e.g., <i>begin by examining a child-friendly proclamation, such as the school proclamations written during the 2016 commemorations, to discuss what a ‘proclamation’ means today. Then, with support, compare these with selected, accessible extracts from the 1916 Proclamation, identifying words or ideas that highlight key values such as independence, democracy, or equal rights</i>)• Research the key figures involved in the 1916 Rising (e.g. <i>the seven signatories of the proclamation</i>), compiling biographies for chosen individuals they find interesting or are curious about• Analyse photographs or artefacts (such as uniforms, bullet-marked buildings) to ask questions about the time (e.g., <i>given an image of a destroyed GPO, children generate inquiry questions like “What happened here?”</i>)
Communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compose diary entries from different perspectives during the 1916 Rising (e.g., <i>children take on the role of a child living in Dublin, a nurse or a participant in the 1916 Rising expressing emotions, observations and experiences in the first person, for example writing a postcard from the perspective of someone who was taking refuge inside the GPO when it was being bombarded, expressing thoughts, feelings, hopes, worries etc.</i>)• Create a timeline of events which led up to the 1916 Rising (<i>in their timeline, children may highlight the Act of Union, Catholic Emancipation, The Great Famine, the Home Rule Movement and they may choose other events to include in the timeline</i>)• Debate questions such as “<i>Was the 1916 Rising a success or failure?</i>” based on their exploration of different viewpoints, preparing arguments and using evidence to support their reasoning.
Understanding and connecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore how the 1916 Rising is remembered through monuments, ceremonies, names of significant buildings (<i>such as railway stations</i>) and national holidays• Investigate local connections to the 1916 Rising (e.g., <i>research local people involved in 1916 or visit a nearby memorial, grave or street named after a figure from the 1916 Rising</i>)• Link to modern examples of protest, revolution or independence movements (e.g., <i>engage in classroom discussion to compare the 1916 Rising with modern movements such as climate protests</i>)• Reflect on how different people experienced the 1916 Rising (e.g., <i>through drama, storytelling, or diary writing, taking on the roles of civilians, rebels, children or British soldiers to develop empathy and understand multiple perspectives</i>)

Ideas for teaching:

Pedagogical approach	Ideas
Dialogic pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate classroom discussions around key ideas of the 1916 Proclamation Prompt debate on the contents of an updated proclamation reflecting their priorities for the current Irish society (e.g., <i>consider that this proclamation was written one hundred years ago. Are these ideas still relevant to a diverse multi-cultural Ireland today?</i>) Ask questions which reflect on values, ideals and aspirations of children living in today's world and record their ideas (e.g., <i>generating mind maps</i>)
Inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pose a compelling historical question such as, <i>"Why did the leaders of the 1916 Rising believe it was necessary to take action?"</i> or <i>"How did ordinary people experience the events of Easter Week?"</i>, to spark curiosity and guide pupil-led exploration Provide children with a carefully chosen range of primary and secondary sources (e.g. <i>photographs, maps, the 1916 Proclamation, eyewitness accounts</i>) as evidence for children to examine, interpret and question and reflect on 'What was life like in the 1916 period (<i>homes, living conditions, education, poverty/wealth, pastimes, etc.</i>)?' Support children's investigations through sub-questions or sub-themes (e.g. <i>leadership, locations, consequences</i>), allowing children to research, share findings and build a collective understanding of the 1916 Rising through collaborative inquiry
Play and playful pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a role-play where children take on the roles of various figures from 1916 (e.g. <i>leaders, men, women and children, journalists</i>) and engage in a mock debate, press conference or decision-making scenario to explore motivations and consequences in a playful, yet meaningful way Devise games and challenges, such as a timeline sorting activity, a <i>"Who Am I?"</i> character guessing game, or a <i>"Fact or Fiction?"</i> quiz to make learning interactive and reinforce key content knowledge and historical understanding (<i>Children could focus on the 7 signatories of the proclamation here, such as 'meet the Signatory' with teacher in role and pupils in the role of Researchers of the Past (ROP). Each individual character is introduced, providing as much information as possible about their lives. Children are encouraged to think about what they would like to ask the person if they were present in the classroom. Questions are recorded and future research can be undertaken to find the answers</i>) Design and build models or scenes—such as the GPO or key Dublin locations—<i>using art materials or construction toys</i> - allowing children to explore the physical setting of the 1916 Rising while collaborating creatively and/or create charcoal drawings of the signatory they are most take with to replicate the photography of the time

Ideas for integration:

Subject	Learning Outcome	Ideas
Language (L1)	<p>Strand: <i>Reading</i></p> <p>Identify and discuss features of texts which convey a particular purpose, genre or voice and infer meanings which are not explicitly stated</p>	<p>Children may analyse a primary source, such as the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, or newspaper coverage of the Rising. Explore how the language reflects the cultural and political identity of the authors, their intentions, and how these differ from opposing or contemporary perspectives (e.g., <i>British and Irish press coverage</i>)</p> <p>Read aloud a short extract from a children’s historical novel (e.g., ‘<i>The Guns of Easter</i>’) describing a child’s experience of the rising. In small groups or pairs children could discuss guided questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Whose voice do we hear in this passage?</i> • <i>How does the writer help us imagine what the character is feeling without saying it directly? (clues in descriptions of sounds, smells, or their reactions).</i> • <i>What can we infer about life in Dublin during the Rising from this scene?</i>
Mathematics	<p>Strand: <i>Measures (Time)</i></p> <p>Solve and pose practical tasks and problems involving the interpretation and calculation of time</p>	<p>Children may create a timeline of key events during Easter Week 1916 (e.g., <i>the reading of the Proclamation, occupation of the GPO, British military response, and surrender</i>). Calculate the duration of events, compare how long different battles or occupations lasted, and reflect on how quickly events unfolded across different days</p>
Music	<p>Strand: <i>Exploring and making music</i></p> <p>Listen to, follow, interpret, respond, reflect on and analyse a variety of songs, musical pieces and excerpts in a range of active, sensory and embodied ways</p>	<p>Children may explore traditional Irish music or songs (e.g. “<i>The Foggy Dew</i>” or “<i>Grace</i>”) and discuss how these pieces communicate emotions and historical narratives linked to the 1916 Rising</p> <p>Then, as a creative extension, children may compose or perform a simple piece of music that reflects the emotions or atmosphere of a key event (e.g., <i>the reading of the Proclamation, the occupation of the GPO, or the aftermath of the Rising</i>). They might choose instruments, vocal timbre, rhythm, or tempo to reflect themes of bravery, sorrow, hope or loss</p>

Ideas for assessment:

Assessment method	Ideas
Project-based learning	Children may choose a key event/significant person associated with the 1916 Rising and complete a project (<i>using preferred method(s) of communication and presentation, for example posters, slide decks, written pieces, artistic expression</i>) and the teacher uses a rubric to assess historical thinking, chronological thinking and creativity
Conferencing	Teachers may use input from children in one-to-one or small group conversations to elicit the child(ren)'s level of understanding and development of relevant skills and concepts of working as a historian
Portfolios	Teachers may assess children's learning through the collection of samples of children's work over the course of their exploration of the topic of the 1916 Rising (e.g., <i>reflective pieces of writing/ journals, responses to stories, poetry or music in visual format, examples of group project work etc.</i>)

Progression

Progression in Social and Environmental Education involves the gradual development and extension of key concepts and the skills of working as a historian and geographer, enabling children to question, investigate and interpret the world around them - past and present - with increasing depth and confidence. Please note that more detailed, specific guidance on progression within Social and Environmental Education will follow in due course.

In the case of the concept of 'Cause and effect', children's learning across the four stages could be described as follows:

'Cause and effect' involves developing an understanding that events in the past can have multiple causes and effects.



The child:

notices that characters in stories make choices that lead to different results

examines a range of historical sources to find clues about causes of historical events and changes

explores a wider range of historical sources to identify clues about causes of events and changes which may have occurred

critically examines a range of more sophisticated historical sources to uncover evidence of causes and effects of events and changes

In the case of the skill of 'Historical thinking', children's learning across the four stages could be described as follows:

'Historical thinking' involves examining and interpreting evidence from the past to understand, question and create historical narratives



The child:

engages with stories from the past

makes connections between stories and begins to distinguish between fictional accounts and real accounts

listens, responds and reflects on key themes and events in stories from a range of periods and places

engages with and reflects on a wider range of more complex stories, from different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds

Ideas for resources

Information on the Seven Signatories (e.g., [Gov.ie website](#))

Virtual tours and museum resources (e.g., [National Museum of Ireland](#))

Children's historical novels that deal with the topic of the 1916 Rising

Primary Sources

- Copies or excerpts of historical documents such as the Proclamation of the Irish Republic
- Newspaper articles from the period (simplified or adapted for Stage 4)
- Letters, diaries, or personal accounts from people involved in or affected by the Rising

Local and Community Resources

- Visits to local historical sites or monuments linked to the 1916 Rising
- Guest speakers with expertise in Irish history
- Community archives or library collections

Multimedia Resources

- Historical photographs, posters, and illustrations
- Short documentary clips or animated summaries suitable for classroom viewing
- Audio recordings of speeches, songs, or oral histories related to the 1916 Rising (e.g., [Online Exhibition | The 1916 Rising: Personalities and Perspectives | National Library of Ireland](#))