

# The First Dáil and the War of Independence in Ireland



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# Aim

- I can understand key events surrounding The War of Independence in Ireland and the First Dáil.

# What Will I Learn About?

- The aftermath of the 1916 Rising in Ireland.
- The events leading up to the first Dáil meeting in Dublin.
- The key events in the Irish War of Independence.
- The Partitioning of Ireland and counties involved.
- The terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty.
- The formation of the first Irish government without British rule.

# After the Easter 1916 Rising

- The leaders of the 1916 Rising had been executed in Kilmainham Gaol.
- Two of the leaders were spared execution:
  - Countess Markievicz as she was a woman;
  - Éamon deValera as he was born in America.
- After the other leaders had been executed the public began to support the rebels and people turned against Britain.
- Britain blamed Sinn Féin (a political party) for the Rising but they had not taken part whatsoever.
- Many members of Sinn Féin who had been wrongly imprisoned were released by the end of 1916.
- The following year Éamon de Valera became leader of Sinn Féin and took charge of the Irish Volunteers also.

# Michael Collins

- Michael Collins was born in Cork in 1890.
- He was one of the rebels who fought in the GPO during the Easter Rising.
- After the Rising, he was imprisoned in Wales in Frongoch Prison with other Irish rebels.
- While there, he trained the rebels in guerrilla warfare – fighting involving hit and run.
- Collins was released from prison in December 1916.



# Éamon de Valera

- De Valera was appointed leader of Sinn Féin and the Irish Volunteers.
- When negotiations with Britain and Ireland failed, de Valera continued to resist British rule and was put back into prison in May 1918. He was sent to Lincoln Prison in England.
- Michael Collins helped him to escape in February 1919.
- A few months later, he travelled to America with the aim of raising money to buy more weapons for the IRA (Irish Republican Army) and to assist with their political wishes.



# The First Dáil

- In December 1918, an election was held in Ireland.
- Sinn Féin won the majority of seats – 73 out of 107.
- The Home Rule Party won six and the Unionists won 26.
- The elected members of Sinn Féin refused to go to the Westminster Parliament in London.
- They established their own parliament in Dublin – Dáil Éireann.



# War of Independence

- The first Dáil meeting was the beginning of the War of Independence in Ireland.
- The IRA began to fight the British in Ireland using guerrilla warfare.
- Groups ambushed the British Army and police.
- These groups were known as 'Flying Columns' as they moved quickly from place to place and disappeared very quickly after attack.
- Famous leaders of the Flying Columns were Tom Barry (Cork) and Dan Breen (Tipperary).



# Black and Tans

- Britain sent groups of reinforcements to defend their men in Ireland.
- The most well-known of these groups was the 'Black and Tans'.
- They were named as such as they wore black coats and tan trousers.



# Bloody Sunday

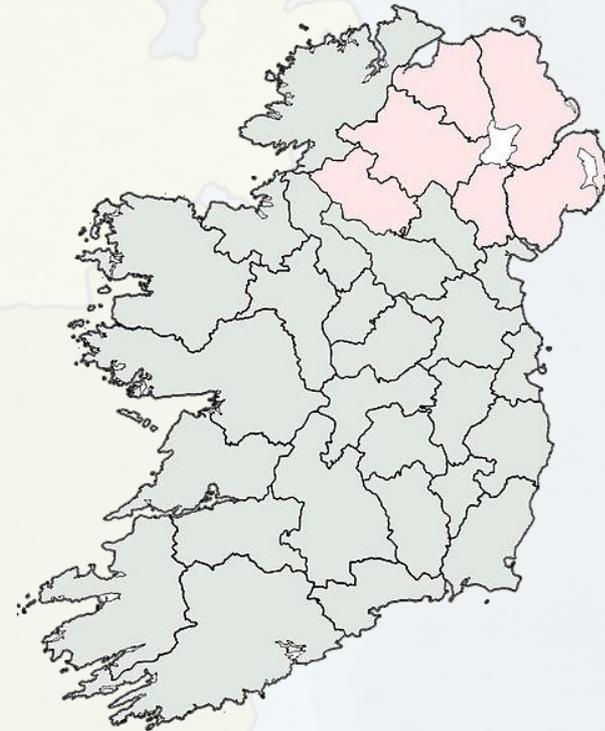
- Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1920 became known as Bloody Sunday.
- Michael Collins led a group that killed 14 British agents known as the Cairo Gang.
- In retaliation, the British fired on people at a match in Croke Park.
- 12 people were killed and 60 injured.
- One of the dead was Michael Hogan, a player from Tipperary.
- The Hogan Stand in Croke Park is named after him.



Scenes outside Jervis Street Hospital, where victims of the shooting were taken.

# The Partition of Ireland

- The British government had decided that enough fighting had taken place and a solution needed to be found.
- The Government of Ireland Act was established in December 1920.
- Under the act, Ireland would have two parliaments – one in Dublin and another in Belfast.
- It was proposed that the parliament in Belfast would govern the whole of Ulster but the Unionists felt that only six counties should be included – Antrim, Down, Armagh, Fermanagh, Derry and Tyrone.
- The partition was to separate the Unionists and Nationalists.
- However, it caused great upset from both sides.



The Partition of Ireland showing the counties governed by Britain known as Northern Ireland

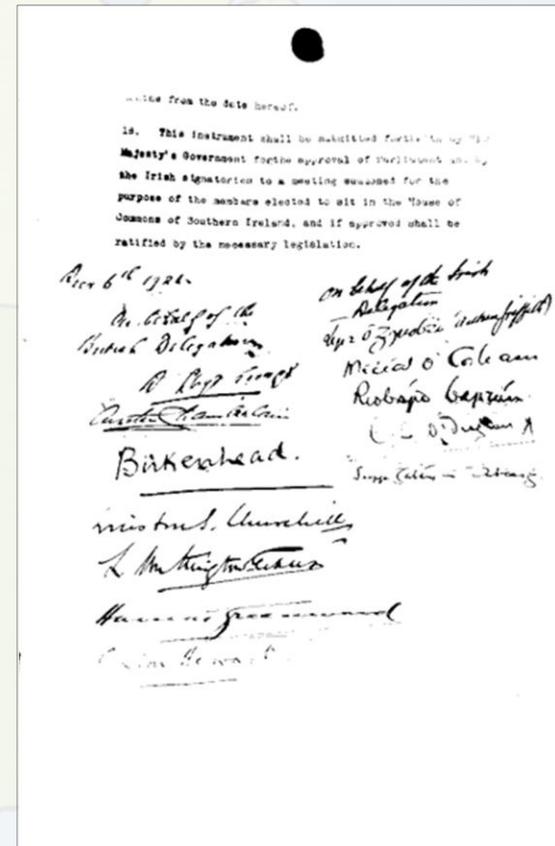
# The Beginning of the End

- A General Election was held in May 1921 in Ireland.
- The Unionists won 40 out of 52 seats for the Belfast parliament.
- Sinn Féin won 128 of the 132 seats for the Dublin parliament.
- King George V invited Éamon de Valera to London to talk.
- The IRA were running short on weapons.
- Both agreed that the fighting should stop.
- On July 11<sup>th</sup> 1921, the IRA and British forces came to a truce and agreed that the war was over.

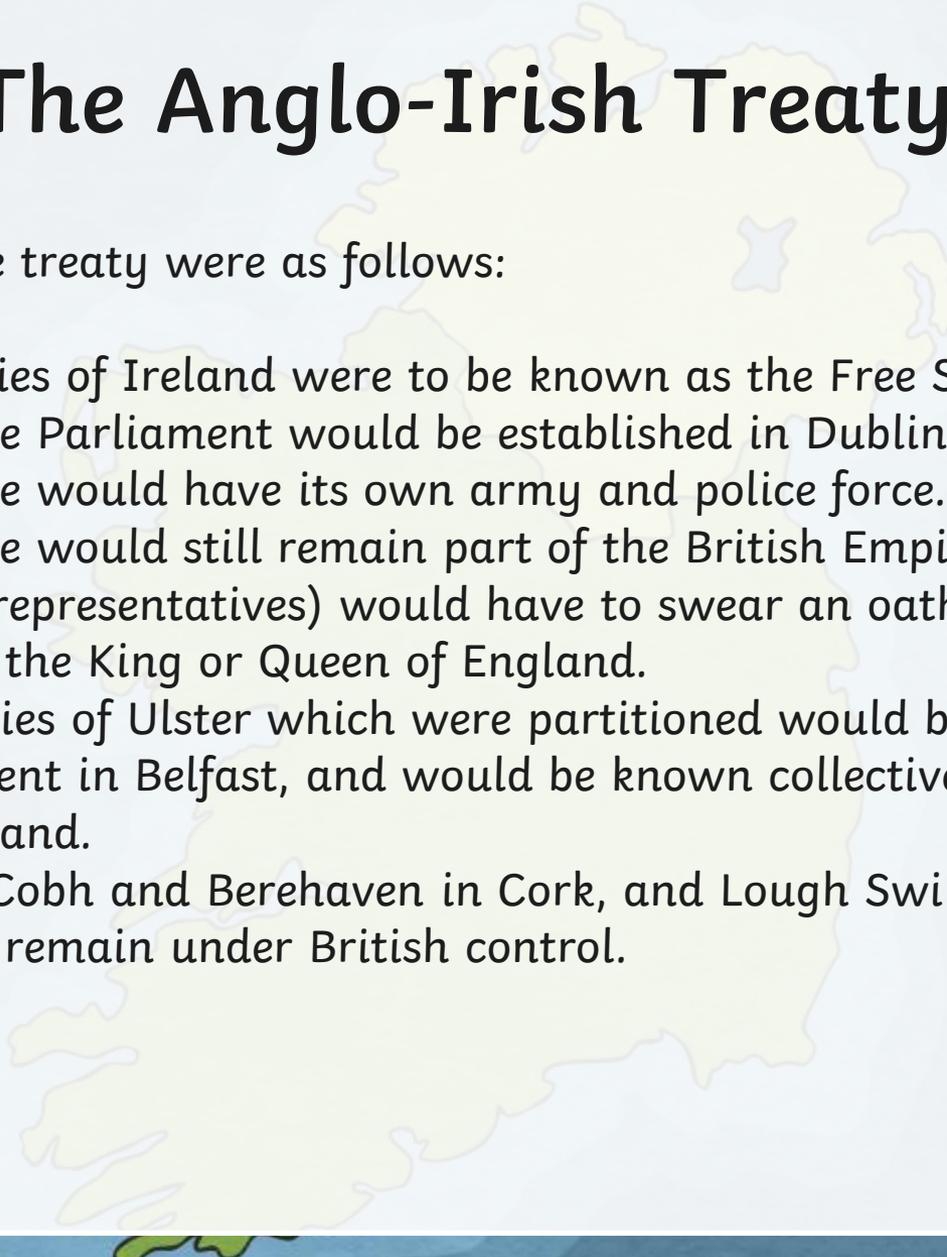


# The Anglo-Irish Treaty

- In October 1921, a conference was organised in Downing Street, London between De Valera and the Prime Minister of Britain, Lloyd George.
- De Valera himself did not take part in the negotiations but never gave a concrete reason for this.
- Some people speculated it was because he felt a 32-county republic would never be obtained.
- Two months of negotiations took place between Ireland and Britain.
- Lloyd George eventually threatened war if the Irish delegates did not comply and sign the treaty under his terms.



# The Anglo-Irish Treaty



The terms of the treaty were as follows:

- The 26 counties of Ireland were to be known as the Free State.
- The Free State Parliament would be established in Dublin.
- The Free State would have its own army and police force.
- The Free State would still remain part of the British Empire.
- TDs (elected representatives) would have to swear an oath of allegiance to the King or Queen of England.
- The six counties of Ulster which were partitioned would be governed by a parliament in Belfast, and would be known collectively as Northern Ireland.
- The ports of Cobh and Berehaven in Cork, and Lough Swilly in Ulster would remain under British control.

# A Divide in Opinion

- The Irish public welcomed the idea of the treaty.
- It was brought before the Dáil in Dublin on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 1921.
- It was discussed for a further three weeks.
- De Valera, who was the current President of the Dáil, opposed the treaty, arguing that Irish independence would be compromised.
- Collins argued that the treaty gave Ireland the chance to seek further freedom.
- A vote took place on January 7<sup>th</sup>, resulting in a 64 / 57 divide with those in favour of the treaty in majority.
- De Valera, along with those opposed to the treaty, walked out and Arthur Griffith became President of the Dáil.
- Collins was appointed the Minister of Finance.

# A Divide in Opinion

- On January 15<sup>th</sup> 1922, British officials began to withdraw from Ireland.
- They left Dublin Castle, where they held office, and power was handed over to Collins.
- Ireland had its own government in Dublin for the first time in more than 100 years.

