

EASTER RISING

Classroom Pack



EASTER IN IRELAND - HISTORY

In Ireland, the celebration of Easter is tied to the celebration of spring and the ancient Celtic and pagan festival of Imbolc or Imbolg.

The symbols associated with Easter – including eggs, rabbits and flowers – come from these ancient traditions, as they symbolise spring, growth and rebirth. Many families sow seeds or plant daffodils around this time of year.



EASTER IN IRELAND - FOOD

Food is very important at Easter, and one of the main traditions involves having a big family feast on Easter Sunday!

The most popular foods eaten on this day are roast lamb, and leek soup. Have you tried them? Many children also often receive chocolate Easter eggs, either from their family or from a rabbit called the Easter bunny.



EASTER IN IRELAND - RELIGION

In Ireland, Easter is still widely celebrated as a religious holiday, and is the most important event in the Christian calendar.

Christians celebrate this holiday over a four-day period spanning from Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday, during which they take part in a number of religious ceremonies such as praying at the 'Stations of the Cross' and attending Easter Sunday mass.



EASTER IN IRELAND - DANCE

In some parts of Ireland, dancing is also a very important part of Easter tradition.

Some families rise at dawn on Easter Sunday to dance in celebration of the day, while others hold a large cake dancing contest called a pruthóg, where the prize is a cake or brambrack!



THE 1916 RISING

Along with the traditional celebrations that take place in Ireland around Easter time, it is also a very important time to remember Irish history.

This is because on Easter Monday in 1916, an event happened in Ireland known as the 'Easter Rising'.



BRITISH RULE

At this time Ireland was being ruled by the British. Many people disagreed with British rule in Ireland and so wanted to rebel and create an independent republic – a country led by a president rather than a king or queen.

The main group that wanted this was known as the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB), and they planned a rebellion that took place in 1916.



EASTER MONDAY

On Easter Monday, the 24th April 1916, a large group of men and women took over key buildings in Dublin City, including landmarks such as Liberty Hall, Dublin Castle and the General Post Office (GPO), which was also the rebels' headquarters.

On the steps of the GPO, the rebels' leader, Patrick Pearse, read out a new Irish declaration of independence, now known as the 1916 Proclamation. This document was very important and stated that each Irish man and woman should be free to rule themselves, and that the country should be free of any British intervention. Fighting swiftly broke out on the streets of Dublin, leading to many buildings being destroyed and many casualties, with almost 500 people dying.



SURRENDER AND ARREST

After a week of fighting the rebels realised that they would not be able to defeat the British Army, and so to prevent any more injuries or deaths they surrendered and were arrested.

Tried for treason (the crime of betraying one's ruling country), many of the Irish rebel leaders and volunteers were sentenced to death.



LEGACY

While at first, the majority of people in Ireland did not support the Easter Rising, when word spread of the leaders' execution, they became heroes and others began to support their cause.

Although the rebels did not achieve their goal at the time, the Easter Rising would bring about a number of other events in Ireland that would eventually lead to Ireland becoming an independent republic.



ROGER CASEMENT

The Irish are well known throughout history for having a very rebellious spirit, so it is no wonder that events like the Easter Rising happened in Irish history.

There are many important figures throughout the years that have contributed to this aspect of being Irish. One such figure that is also found in EPIC The Irish Emigration Museum is Roger Casement. He was born on September 1st 1864 in Sandycove, Dublin to an Anglo-Irish family, which meant his family had both British and Irish members. He worked for most of his life in the British Civil Service.



HUMANITARIAN

Throughout his life he is known as a great humanitarian, which meant that he cared a lot about other people.

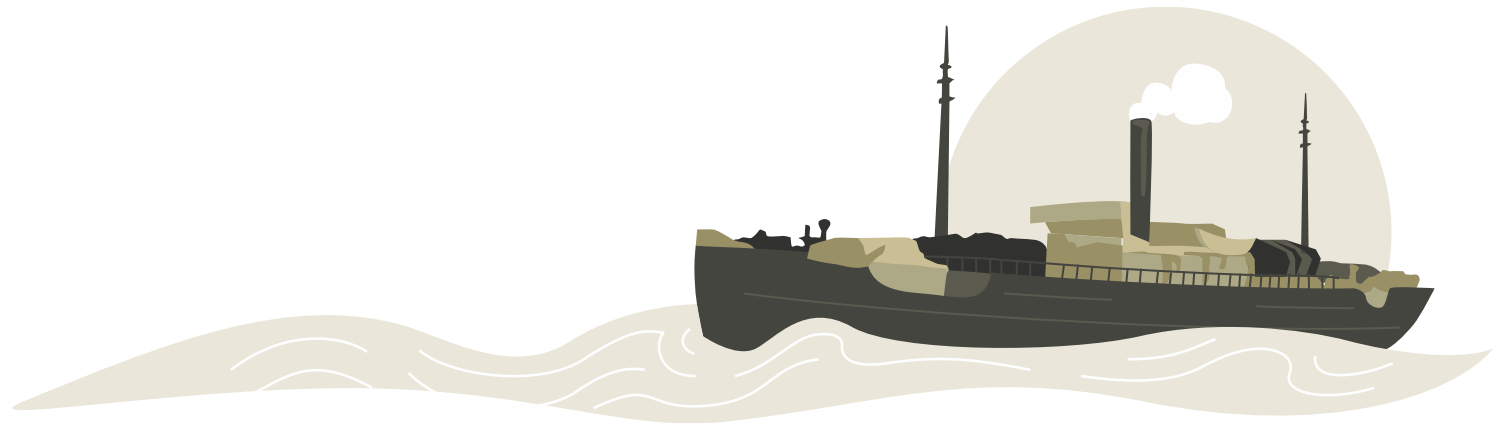
Although he worked for the British government, he started to distrust the imperial system (foreign rule in other countries) after discovering how poorly native people in Africa were being treated.



THE FACE OF THE IRISH FIGHT

In 1913, he left his job and quickly joined the Irish Volunteers – a military organisation helping the Irish Republican Brotherhood in their fight for independence.

He worked as a recruiter for them, trying to get others to join their cause. As part of this, he became the face of the Irish fight around the world.



THE 1916 EASTER RISING

While Roger was one of the key leaders of the Easter Rising, he never actually took part in the rebellion itself!

He was arrested on Good Friday, trying to smuggle guns into Ireland – three whole days before the Easter Rising took place! At the time the fighting broke out, he was across the sea in London, being questioned for his involvement. He was sentenced to death and died on 3rd August 1916, aged just 51 years old.

