

SEE — GEOGRAPHY &amp; CULTURE · 4TH–6TH CLASS

# An Ghaeltacht

Ireland's Irish-Speaking Regions — 4th–6th Class

## Key vocabulary

1

**An Ghaeltacht**

The collective name for the areas of Ireland where Irish (Gaeilge) is the community language — where Irish is spoken daily at home, in shops, at work, and in school. Scattered areas mainly on the western seaboard.

2

**Gaelscoil (plural: Gaelscoileanna)**

An Irish-medium primary school where all subjects are taught through Irish. Found in both Gaeltacht areas and in English-speaking areas. Growing in number — a significant success story for Irish language revival.

3

**Raidió na Gaeltachta**

The Irish-language radio station, broadcasting since 1972. Based in Casla (Costello), Co. Galway. Central to Gaeltacht life and a lifeline for the language.

4

**TG4**

Irish-language television channel, founded 1996. Broadcasts in Irish with optional subtitles. Highly popular for sport (GAA), drama, and documentary.

5

**Coláiste samhraidh**

Irish college — summer residential course in the Gaeltacht for secondary (and some primary) pupils to improve their Irish through immersion. A rite of passage for many Irish teenagers.

6

**Údarás na Gaeltachta**

The state body that manages economic and social development in the Gaeltacht. Works to sustain communities so that Irish speakers have reasons to stay in their areas.



# Gaeltacht regions

Where Irish is the community language

- CO. GALWAY (Contae na Gaillimhe): the largest Gaeltacht — Connemara (An Cheathrú Rua, Ros Muc, Carna) and the Aran Islands (Oileáin Árann). Approximately 30,000 Irish speakers.
- CO. DONEGAL (Contae Dhún na nGall): multiple Gaeltacht areas — Gaoth Dobhair (Gweedore), the Rosses, Glencolumbkille. Known for distinctive Donegal Irish dialect.
- CO. MAYO (Contae Mhaigh Eo): Achill Island and Erris (Iorras). Smaller but significant.
- CO. KERRY (Contae Chiarraí): the Dingle Peninsula (Corca Dhuibhne) and Iveragh Peninsula. Kerry Irish is considered one of the most musical dialects.
- CO. MEATH (Contae na Mí): a small planned Gaeltacht created by resettlement in the 1930s — different from the naturally occurring western Gaeltachtaí.
- DECLINE AND REVIVAL: the number of daily Irish speakers in the Gaeltacht has declined significantly since the 1920s. Government language planning aims to stabilise communities. Census 2022 showed 40,000+ daily Irish speakers in Gaeltacht areas.
- IMPORTANCE: the Gaeltacht is where Irish is a living community language, not just a school subject. Preserving it is preserving the difference between a living language and an academic one.

