

SEE — IRISH HISTORY · 4TH–6TH CLASS

Na Normannaigh in Éirinn — The Normans in Ireland

Knowledge Organiser — 4th–6th Class

Key vocabulary

1

Normans

Descendants of Norse (Viking) settlers in northern France who conquered England in 1066 (Battle of Hastings). They invaded Ireland in 1169–1170 at the invitation of Diarmait Mac Murchada.

2

Strongbow (Richard de Clare, c.1130–1176)

The Norman earl who led the invasion of Ireland. Married Aoife, daughter of Diarmait Mac Murchada, and claimed the kingdom of Leinster.

3

Diarmait Mac Murchada (c.1110–1171)

King of Leinster who had been exiled and invited the Normans to help him reclaim his kingdom. His invitation changed Irish history.

4

Henry II (1133–1189)

King of England who came to Ireland in 1171 to assert his authority over the Norman lords and the Irish. The beginning of direct English involvement in Ireland.

5

Statutes of Kilkenny (1366)

Laws passed by the Anglo-Norman parliament forbidding the colonists from adopting Irish culture, speaking Irish, or intermarrying with the Irish.

6

Pale

The area around Dublin that remained under English control — roughly stretching 20 miles from Dublin. 'Beyond the Pale' meant outside the area of English law.



Impact on Ireland

What the Normans changed

- **CASTLES:** the Normans built hundreds of motte and bailey and stone castles across Ireland — many still stand today (Kilkenny, Trim, Dublin Castle).
- **TOWNS:** many Irish towns were established or significantly expanded by the Normans — Kilkenny, Wexford, Waterford, Drogheda.
- **LANGUAGE:** Norman French influenced Irish English. Many Irish surnames with 'Fitz-' prefix (Fitzgerald, Fitzpatrick) are Norman (Fitz = son of in Norman French).
- **BECOMING MORE IRISH:** within a few generations, many Norman families had adopted Irish language, law, and customs — 'more Irish than the Irish themselves'.
- **THE PALE:** Dublin and its surrounding area remained the centre of English power for centuries. The phrase 'beyond the pale' (meaning unacceptable behaviour) derives from this.
- **LONG-TERM SIGNIFICANCE:** the Norman invasion of 1169 began a relationship between Ireland and England that would last 750 years and shape Irish history entirely.

