

SEE — CITIZENSHIP · 5TH–6TH CLASS

Rialtas na hÉireann — The Irish Government

SESE Citizenship — 5th & 6th Class

The Irish system of government

1

Bunreacht na hÉireann

The Constitution of Ireland (1937). The founding legal document that sets out how Ireland is governed and the rights of its citizens.

2

An Oireachtas

The Irish parliament — made up of two houses: Dáil Éireann (lower house) and Seanad Éireann (upper house/senate).

Example: Oireachtas: OR-ukh-tus

3

Dáil Éireann

The lower house of the Oireachtas — 160 TDs (Teachta Dála — Members of Parliament) elected by proportional representation (PR-STV). The main legislative body.

Example: TD = Teachta Dála (member of the Dáil)

4

An Taoiseach

The head of government — Prime Minister. Appointed by the President on the nomination of the Dáil. Currently serving as head of the Cabinet.

Example: Taoiseach: TEE-shukh

5

Uachtarán na hÉireann

The President of Ireland. A largely ceremonial role — signs bills into law, can refer bills to the Supreme Court. Elected directly by the people every 7 years.

Example: Uachtarán: OO-ukh-tuh-rawn



6

PR-STV

Proportional Representation — Single Transferable Vote. The voting system used in Irish elections. Voters rank candidates 1, 2, 3... giving parties representation broadly proportional to their vote share.

Law is made in Ireland

From idea to legislation

- 1. A TD or Minister proposes a bill (a proposed law) in the Dáil.
- 2. The bill is debated and voted on in the Dáil (three readings).
- 3. If passed by the Dáil, the bill goes to the Seanad for further consideration.
- 4. If passed by both houses, the bill goes to the President.
- 5. The President signs the bill into law (or refers it to the Supreme Court).
- 6. The bill becomes an Act of the Oireachtas — the law of the land.
- **DISCUSSION:** the voting age in Ireland is 18. Should it be 16? What issues would you want the Dáil to debate?
- **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS:** Ireland ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children can contact their local TD, write to the Oireachtas, or engage with the Ombudsman for Children.

