

SEE — IRISH HISTORY / ENGLISH · 3RD–6TH CLASS

Miotas Ceilteach — Celtic Mythology & Irish Legends

Knowledge Organiser — 3rd–6th Class

Key characters — Príomhcharachtair

1

Tuatha Dé Danann

The mythological divine race who ruled Ireland before the Gaels. Associated with magic, beauty, and wisdom. Defeated by the Milesians (ancestors of the Irish people), they retreated to the sídhe (fairy mounds).

Example: The Dagda, Lugh, the Morrigan, Brigid

2

Cú Chulainn

The greatest hero of Ulster. As a child (Sétanta) he killed Culann's hound and took its place — thus earning the name 'Cú Chulainn' (Culann's hound). Central figure of the Ulster Cycle.

Example: The Táin Bó Cúailnge (The Cattle Raid of Cooley)

3

Fionn Mac Cumhaill

Leader of the Fianna — a band of elite warriors. Gained wisdom by tasting the Salmon of Knowledge. Stories of the Fianna are told throughout Ireland and Scotland.

Example: The Giant's Causeway; Fionn and Sadhbh

4

Children of Lir

Lir's four children were transformed into swans by their jealous stepmother Aoife for 900 years. One of the most loved Irish legends.

5

The Dagda

The 'Good God' — father figure of the Tuatha Dé Danann. Carries a magical club that can kill with one end and revive with the other. Possesses a magical cauldron of plenty.



ycles of Irish mythology

How Irish myths are organi

- MYTHOLOGICAL CYCLE: the gods (Tuatha Dé Danann) and their battles for Ireland. Includes Cath Maige Tuired (the Battle of Moytura).
- ULSTER CYCLE: the warriors of Ulster and their enemies. The Táin Bó Cúailnge (Cattle Raid of Cooley) is the central epic. Cú Chulainn is the hero.
- FENIAN CYCLE: the stories of Fionn Mac Cumhaill and his warrior band the Fianna. More romantic and lyrical in tone than the Ulster Cycle.
- HISTORICAL CYCLE (KINGS' CYCLE): stories of legendary Irish kings — Niall of the Nine Hostages, Conn of the Hundred Battles.
- WRITTEN DOWN: Irish monks in the 7th–12th centuries wrote down oral traditions. Key manuscripts: The Book of the Dun Cow (1100), The Book of Leinster (1150).
- STILL ALIVE: Irish mythology lives in place names (Knocknarea, the Hill of Tara), in festivals (Halloween = Samhain), in literature (W.B. Yeats), and in the Gaeltacht oral tradition.

