

SEE — IRISH HISTORY · 5TH–6TH CLASS

Cogadh na Saoirse agus an Cogadh Cathartha

War of Independence & Civil War — 5th & 6th Class

Key people

1

Michael Collins (1890–1922)

Director of Intelligence of the IRA during the War of Independence. Masterminded the guerrilla campaign against British forces. Key negotiator of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Shot dead at Béal na Bláth, Co. Cork during the Civil War.

2

Éamon de Valera (1882–1975)

President of the Irish Volunteers and Sinn Féin. Opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty, leading the anti-Treaty side in the Civil War. Later became Taoiseach (1932) and President (1959). He survived 1916 because he was an American citizen.

3

Anglo-Irish Treaty (December 1921)

Negotiated between Irish and British representatives after the War of Independence. Created the Irish Free State (26 counties), leaving 6 Ulster counties (Northern Ireland) within the UK. The Treaty divided Irish nationalism — leading directly to the Civil War.

4

Partition

The division of Ireland into two jurisdictions on 3 May 1921: the Irish Free State (26 counties) and Northern Ireland (6 counties). Northern Ireland remained part of the UK.

5

Irish Civil War (June 1922 – May 1923)

A war between pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty forces. The pro-Treaty side (National Army) won. The Civil War left lasting bitterness in Irish politics — Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael trace their origins to opposite sides.



Independence — 1916–1923

Timeline of key events

- 1916: Easter Rising — rebellion fails but executions create martyrs
- 1918: Sinn Féin wins 73 seats in UK general election — refuse to sit at Westminster
- January 1919: First Dáil meets in Dublin. IRA ambush at Soloheadbeg — War of Independence begins
- 1919–1921: Guerrilla war. IRA attacks British forces. Bloody Sunday (November 1920). Black and Tans deployed.
- July 1921: Truce agreed
- December 1921: Anglo-Irish Treaty signed — 26-county Free State, 6 counties remain in UK
- June 1922: Civil War begins. Pro-Treaty (Collins/Griffith) vs Anti-Treaty (de Valera/Rory O'Connor)
- August 1922: Collins killed. Arthur Griffith dies. Massive losses on both sides.
- May 1923: Anti-Treaty forces dump arms. Civil War ends.
- 1937: New constitution (Bunreacht na hÉireann) — Ireland becomes a republic in all but name
- 1949: Republic of Ireland Act — Ireland formally leaves the Commonwealth

