



ATLAS OF THE **IRISH**  
**REVOLUTION**  
*Resources for Schools*



College of  
Arts, Celtic Studies  
and Social Sciences

## Unit 6:

*The Rise of Sinn Féin and the First Dáil  
1916-1919*

*TEACHERS HANDBOOK*



## Senior Cycle Lesson Plans

### UNIT 6: THE RISE OF SINN FÉIN AND THE FIRST DÁIL, 1916-1919

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<b>Field of Study:</b>	Later Modern Field of Study
<b>Syllabus Topic:</b>	Later Modern Ireland, Topic 3: The Pursuit of Sovereignty and the Impact of Partition, 1912-49
<b>Perspective:</b>	Politics and administration
<b>Unit:</b>	The Rise of the Second Sinn Féin party The 1918 Election
<b>Key Personalities:</b>	Éamon de Valera; Arthur Griffith; Countess Markievicz; W. T. Cosgrave
<b>Key Concepts:</b>	Sovereignty, Republic; Protectionism, Allegiance, Physical Force
<b>Required Time:</b>	The teacher may choose from the suggested lessons and worksheets according to the requirements of the class
<b>Resources:</b>	How to Read a Map ( <a href="http://irishrevolution.ie">irishrevolution.ie</a> ) Atlas of the Irish Revolution Document Pack and Student Activity Sheets Projector, Internet connection, Computer Lab

#### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In this series of lessons, senior history students will engage with primary source material and maps based on historical data relating to the Rise of Sinn Féin, 1916-18 in the Atlas of the Irish Revolution. In line with the broad aims and objectives of the Leaving Certificate History Syllabus, engagement with these literary and non-literary texts should enhance students' 'knowledge and understanding' of the differences between the first and second Sinn Féin parties, the impact of the 1916 Rising, the significance of the 1918 general election and the formation of the first Dáil in 1919. These lessons are also designed to reinforce the procedural concepts of 'source and evidence' and 'fact and opinion', and the interpretative concepts of 'cause and consequence' and 'comparison and contrast'.

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The lesson plans and activity sheets are designed to promote the development of skills in working with evidence. Encountering maps as source material bolsters the students' appreciation of the nature and variety of historical evidence. As preparation for 'life and citizenship', students are prompted to think critically and make judgments based on the evaluation of evidence and to be aware of bias and strive to be objective.

*At the conclusion of these lessons students will have*

- a deeper understanding of the key concepts of Sovereignty, Republic; Protectionism, Allegiance, Physical Force
- gained deeper knowledge of the political consequences of the 1916 Rising
- an understanding of the reasons for the rise of Sinn Fein and the decline of the Home Rule Party between 1916 and 1918.
- identified some of the key personalities and groups associated with the Sinn Fein, Home Rule and Volunteer movements, 1916-1919
- a deeper appreciation for the usefulness, strengths and weaknesses of different types of historical sources.
- worked effectively as part of a group in a series of group work assignments.
- practised the research and evaluation skills required to engage in the documents-based questions and to complete their own research study

## **ASSESSMENT**

*Assessment For Learning:*

During these lessons students are encouraged to engage in self-assessment and peer assessment. Collaboratively compiling research checklists, pair and group work and personal and peer assessment are effective strategies for Assessment for Learning, as is constructive teacher feedback – oral and written.

*Assessment of Learning*

Students are assessed by the teacher in class, on their homework (essay) assignments and on the results of the group presentations. Students are given feedback verbally from their teacher, through comments on their work and also through grading.

## **DIFFERENTIATION:**

Higher and ordinary level students are usually in the same class, which means that there should be an important emphasis on differentiation. Differentiation strategies are incorporated into the lesson plans and activity guidelines. These include:

- Giving students the option to choose a task that they are interested in.
- Group work
- Use of Pre-assessment
- Tiered Assignments etc.

## LESSON 1: RETURNING PRISONERS

### Summary:

This lesson is designed to introduce students to the radicalising experience of imprisonment in Frongoch internment camp and British prisons after the 1916 Rising. Through an examination of primary source material, including a prisoner's autograph book, a photograph a newspaper article and an extract from a personal memoir, students explore the experience of the prisoners and the public reactions to their phased releases at Christmas 1916 and in June 1917. Students will also assess the strengths and weaknesses of a memoir, a photograph and a newspaper article as a historical sources. The lesson concludes with students choosing one of two tasks. The first is an imaginative response to the source material and the second is a local research task.

**Key Question:** *How did public opinion of the Easter Rising rebels change between 1916 and 1917?*

### Learning Outcomes : At the conclusion of this lesson students should

- be able to explain the reasons for the shift in public opinion in favour of the rebels by Christmas 1916
- better understand the experience of imprisonment in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising
- have extracted evidence from primary source material to answer questions
- have identified bias and opinion in newspaper reporting
- have evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of a memoir as a historical source

## LESSON 1: RETURNING PRISONERS

### Overview/Starter:

The teacher might begin by projecting the image of the crowd awaiting the returning prisoners at Westland Row in June 1917. Prompt questions might include:

- Can you find any evidence of where this photograph was taken?
- Can you suggest an approximate date?
- Can you describe the atmosphere evoked by the image?

### Teacher Led Learning (input):

A survey of student answers will lead to teacher lead learning about the circumstances surrounding the General Amnesty in December 1916, and the reasons why there was such a big gathering awaiting prisoners who had been left Ireland under a cloud of disapproval.

### Student Task

**Step 1:** Working individually or in pairs, the students read Docs A-D and answer comprehension questions 1-12 that follow. The teacher may choose to move between groups to assess answers or moderate a class discussion once the task is completed.

**Step 2:** Ask students to choose one of the following tasks based on their reading of the sources: Imagine that you are James Joseph Grace and you have just been released from prison. Write a short letter to a friend describing: *a) The events of the day you arrived in Ireland, b) Your feelings about those events, c) Your hopes for the future.*

or

Research the story of a person from your own area who was interned in Frongoch after the 1916 Rising. Write a brief account of *a) Their early life, b) Their involvement, if any, in the events of 1916-1919, c) Any details of their time in Frongoch*

## LESSONS 2-4: PICTURING THE 1917 BY-ELECTIONS

### *Summary:*

During these lessons students will learn about the 1917 by-elections in North Roscommon, South Longford and East Clare and the significance of the Sinn Fein successes at these elections. They will also engage with a map from the Atlas of the Irish Revolution to make judgments about the growth and organisation of Sinn Fein at grass roots level. Historical photograph analysis also features as part of this lesson as students study two images taken during the 1917 by elections before completing a Photograph Analysis worksheet.

Lastly students will be introduced to a collection of electioneering material used by the Sinn Fein candidates in 1917. Students are guided through an analysis of the propaganda techniques unique to this type of material. The task will also enhance students' understanding of the Sinn Fein platforms in 1917.

The final group task involves using the electioneering documents and the map as the basis for running their own election campaign. Students will work in groups to examine the issues involved in the respective by-elections, learn about the candidates, prepare a campaign strategy and put it into action.

*Key Questions:*                    *How did Sinn Fein increase its level of popular support between 1917-1918?  
In what parts of Ireland was support for Sinn Fein at its highest in 1917?*

### *Learning Outcomes : At the conclusion of this lessons students should have*

- a greater understanding of the aims and objectives of Sinn Fein in 1917
- explained the reasons for the rapid growth in Sinn Féin's popularity
- analysed historical photographs
- understood the reasons for Eamon de Valera's sweeping victory in East Clare.
- compared different sources about the same topic and identified their relative strengths and weaknesses
- identified the propaganda techniques used in electioneering material

## LESSON 6: PICTURING THE 1917 BY-ELECTIONS

### *Part 1: Overview/Starter:*

The teacher might begin showing a very short clip from the pathe footage of Arthur Griffith's by election victory in East Cavan in 1918. It features an excited crowd waving tri-colours and evokes a sense of the excitement at the Sinn Fein victory. Student may be invited to suggest what the video depicts and to describe the atmosphere. <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/sinn-fein-victor-e-cavan/query/Political>

### *Part 2: Teacher Led Learning (input):*

Student suggestions will lead to the presentation of an overview of the 1917 by-elections and their significance. The teacher may need to provide some background on Count Plunkett as the father of one executed and two imprisoned participants in the 1916 Rising, as well as the reasons for the growing popularity of Sinn Fein. It may also be necessary to quickly revise the features/ elements of propaganda.

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### *Student Task 1: Analysing a historical photograph*

- Step 1:** Working in pairs, students examine the two photographs (Documents E and F) and complete the Photograph Analysis sheet on the next page of the Student Worksheet.
- Step 2:** When complete, each pair should compare their answers with another pair of students.
- Step 3:** In asking groups of four to feed back their answers in a class forum, the teacher is afforded an opportunity to reinforce the importance of forensically reconstructing a historical image before making a judgment.

### *Student Task 2: The Spread of the Sinn Féin Movement*

- Step 1:** Working in pairs, students examine the electioneering material (*Doc G*) relating to the 1917 by-elections of Plunkett, McGuinness and De Valera.
- Step 2:** Next the same pairs take time to examine the map (*Doc H*) showing the distribution of Sinn Féin Clubs in December 1917 and its caption.
- Step 3:** Working together, the students complete the comprehension questions 1-9 on the next page of the Student Worksheet. Depending on time and necessity, the teacher may choose to move between groups while students consider the comprehension questions or moderate a class discussion once the task is completed.

### *Student Task 3: Running an Election Campaign*

- Step 1:** Organise the class into groups of four. Each group will be assigned one of the following candidates:

- (a) **Count George Noble Plunkett**  
Independent, North Roscommon by election, Feb 1917
- (b) **Thomas Devine**  
Irish Parliamentary Party candidate, North Roscommon by election, Feb 1917
- (c) **Jasper Tully**  
Independent, North Roscommon by election, Feb 1917
- (d) **Joseph McGuinness**  
Sinn Féin candidate, South Longford, by election, May 1917
- (e) **Paddy McKenna**  
Irish Parliamentary Party candidate, South Longford by election, May 1917
- (f) **Éamon de Valera**  
Sinn Féin candidate, East Clare by election, July 1917
- (g) **Patrick Lynch**  
Irish Parliamentary Party candidate, East Clare by election, July 1917

- Step 2:** All group members should consult the relevant profile sheet on the pages that follow and individually

- (a) List 3 reasons why should people vote for your candidate
- (b) List 3 reasons why people might vote for the opposition candidate(s)

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*Step 3:* The groups should meet to discuss their initial ideas and begin to plan campaign strategies. Before the class finishes the students in each group should divide the research tasks in parts (1) and (2) of the *Campaign Planning Worksheet* evenly between them.

- (a) *Your candidate's background and his main strengths and weaknesses*
- (b) *The opposition candidate(s), his background and key policies*
- (c) *The opposition's main weaknesses*
- (d) *Who your potential voters are and how to best engage with them*

*Step 4:* At the beginning of the next class, the groups should come together to present the results of their research and finalise their plans for the campaign. Based on these discussions, the group should also decide on their campaign slogan and allocate roles for part (3) of the *Campaign Planning Worksheet*.

- (a) *An Electioneering Poster: eye-catching and memorable with a strong central message*
- (b) *An Electioneering Leaflet: Written using persuasive language, it should provide details about the candidate and reasons to vote for him.*
- (c) *A Campaign Speech: Write a three-minute persuasive campaign speech to be delivered by your candidate*

*Step 5:* The next step is to put your campaign into action. The strategy teams for the North Roscommon Election should begin.

Two students will display the electioneering material for the rest of the class, while the third student briefly outlines the significant aspects of the poster and leaflet. The fourth member of the team will act as the candidate and deliver the campaign speech to the rest of the class.

*Step 6:* The remaining teams for the North Roscommon election will repeat the steps above until all of the candidates have delivered their speeches.

*Step 7:* The class will be given time to complete the voting ballot for the North Roscommon by-election below. Place **No. 1** in the box beside your favorite candidate based on:

- *The quality of the electioneering material (poster & leaflet)*
- *The level of preparation and effort in the election campaign*
- *The extent to which the campaign speech proved persuasive*
- *How well the poster, leaflet and speech outlined the candidate's policies*
- *How well the poster, leaflet and speech undermined the opposition*

*Step 8:* The candidates for the North Longford and East Clare by-elections should next present to the class in the same way as the Roscommon teams. After the candidates for each by-election have spoken, the class will be given time to complete the ballot in the templates provided.

*Part 4: Plenary Review:* To conclude this lesson the votes should be counted and the winning candidates for each by-election announced.

## LESSON 5: EXHIBITING 1917

### *Summary:*

This lesson is designed to guide students in discovering the significance of the death and funeral of Thomas Ashe to the republican movement in 1917. In this lesson, students will engage with four primary sources relating to the circumstances surrounding the Ashe's death, his funeral and inquest. The comprehension questions that follow encourage students to extract evidence from the primary sources to account for the significance of Ashe's death and the public reaction to his funeral. They are also guided in identifying how republican movement maximised on the propaganda potential of the funeral and inquest. Lastly students will work in groups to design an exhibition space dedicated to one of the key events in 1917. Considering elements to include in the exhibition demands that students prioritise the significant aspects of each event and engage creatively with the source material.

*Key Question:* What was the significance of the death and funeral of Thomas Ashe in 1917?

### *Learning Outcomes : At the conclusion of this lesson students should*

- be able to explain the circumstances leading up and after the death of Thomas Ashe on 25 September 1917
- have a deeper understanding of the significance of Thomas Ashe's death
- have interrogated several primary source documents relating to the same topic
- be more aware of the bias in oral history accounts
- have responded creatively to a selection of historical texts

## LESSON 5: EXHIBITING 1917

### *Overview/Starter:*

Before beginning the lessons, the teacher should outline the learning outcomes for this lesson(s). The teacher might begin by showing the short clip of original footage from the funeral of Thomas Ashe. This is accessible online at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HrLd5E1f1Fc>

The footage evokes a sense that the event was of significant and prompts questions such as what is depicted, where was it shot, what atmosphere is detectable, who are the men in uniform, what evidence that it was a significant event, etc.

### *Teacher Led Learning (input):*

Students' responses to the video footage will lead to teacher led learning about the background to the events in 1917. A short biography of Ashe would be useful, as would details about the Irish convention in 1917. Direct the students to Documents I -L in the student worksheet.

### *Student Task: Thomas Ashe*

*Step 1:* Working in pairs, students examine the Documents I and L and complete comprehensions 1-9 that follow.



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## LESSON 6: CONVENTIONS AND CONSCRIPTION

### *Summary:*

This lesson is designed to enhance students understanding of the significance of the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis and the Volunteer organising convention of October 1917. Primary source documents provide an insight into the how the moderate and more extreme shades of nationalism were brought under the banner of Sinn Fein and how the Irish Volunteers, reorganised under the leadership of Eamon de Valera, came to represent the military wing of the political Sinn Fein movement. The lesson also examines the importance of the Conscription Crisis in 1918 and how it resulted in an influx of new recruits into the Volunteers, Cumann na mBan and Sinn Fein. Students interrogate a range of primary source material to extract evidence and answer questions.

*Key Questions:*            *What was the significance of Sinn Fein Ard Fheis in October 1917?*  
*What was the Conscription Crisis and how did it benefit Sinn Fein?*

*Learning Outcomes :* *At the conclusion of these lessons students should*

- be more familiar with Key Personality Eamon de Valera
- better understand the Key Concepts of Sovereignty, Republic and Physical Force
- understand the significance of the Conscription Crisis in April 1918
- have engaged in primary source analysis
- have collated information from a variety of sources to answer a historical question

## LESSON 6. CONVENTIONS AND CONSCRIPTION

### *Overview/Starter:*

The teacher begins by explaining the learning outcomes for this lesson.

### *Teacher Led Learning (input):*

It may be necessary to provide some background on the key personalities of Eamon De Valera and Arthur Griffith. The teacher may also need to define the idea of conscription and the reasons for Irish opposition before directing students to documents M-Q in the Student Worksheet.

### *Student Task:*

**Step 1:** Working individually or in pairs, the students read Docs M -Q on the Sinn Fein Convention, the Volunteer Convention and the Conscription Crisis before answering comprehension questions 1-15 that follow. The teacher may choose to move between groups while students consider the comprehension questions or moderate a class discussion once the task is completed.

**Step 2:** The final question (no 16) asks students to draw together all of the information and evidence gleaned from the interrogation of documents A-Q to answer questions about the development of the Volunteers and Sinn Fein in their own county. The focal point of this question is Document Q: An Atlas of the Irish Revolution Map showing the growth in membership of the Volunteers and Sinn Fein in each county between June 1917 and June 1918. This question is an individual research and writing task.

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## LESSON 7: A POLITICAL REVOLUTION: THE 1918 GENERAL ELECTION

### *Summary:*

During this lesson students will consider the significance of the German Plot arrests on the night of 17–18 May 1918. A selection of election literature and newspaper reports from 1918 will prompt student discussions on the differences between the Sinn Féin and the Irish Parliamentary Party election platforms. An Atlas of the Irish Revolution map showing the candidates returned in each Irish constituency in the December 1918 general election represents the focal point for a consideration of the growth of Sinn Fein between 1917 and 1918. Lastly, students will work together on a speech writing task taking on the role of a Sinn Fein candidate in a named constituency. Researching that candidate, the Sinn Fein election manifesto and contemporary reports of election speeches, the students will draft a speech to be delivered to their constituents on the eve of the election.

*Key Questions:* What factors led to the success of Sinn Fein in the 1918 general election?

*Learning Outcomes :* At the conclusion of this lessons students should have

- developed a deeper understanding of reasons why Sinn Fein swept the boards at the 1918 general election
- clear understanding of the significance of the German Plot arrests in May 1918
- Evaluated electioneering literature and identified persuasive techniques
- compared historical documents relating to the same topic
- collated evidence from a variety of sources on the same topic
- presented their findings in a structured and logical manner

## LESSON 7: A POLITICAL REVOLUTION: THE 1918 GENERAL ELECTION

### *Part 1: Overview/Starter:*

As a starter exercise the teacher may decide to project the Atlas of the Irish Revolution maps of (a) The results of the 1910 general election in Ireland and (b) the results of the 1918 general election in Ireland and ask students to identify the obvious differences. This should visually demonstrate the dramatically changed political landscape and prompt a discussion on the reasons for the incredible decline in the popularity of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the intervening eight years. The in-fo-graphic on p. 2 of the student worksheet may also be useful to quickly revise the reasons for the growth of Sinn Fein after the 1916 Rising.

### *Part 2: Teacher Led Learning (input):*

It may be necessary to provide some background information on the German Plot and the expanded electorate in 1918 before directing students to documents R-W in the student worksheet.

### *Student Task 1.*

*Step 1:* Working individually or in pairs, students examine Docs R-W before answering comprehension questions 1-9 that follow.

*Step 2:* The teacher will oversee a class discussion once the task is completed.

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## *Student Task 2.*

*Step 1:* The teacher explains the concept that students will take on the roles of Sinn Fein candidate for a named constituency and campaign manager.

*It is the week before the general election and you are due to speak at a public meeting in your local town. You must prepare your 3 minute speech in advance of the meeting.*

*Step 2:* Organise the class into pairs and assign a constituency to each pair.

*Step 3:* Students should find the name of the Sinn Fein candidate in their assigned constituency and conduct research into their candidate's background.

*(If the candidate was arrested during the German Plot, he will be writing his speech from prison to be delivered at the meeting by one of his deputies.)*

*Step 4:* Working in pairs, the students re-read the newspaper accounts of the recent meetings in other constituencies [Document W], taking note of the main talking points and the arguments made by their opponents so that they can address them in their speech. Students should also re-read the Sinn Fein manifesto and the other documents in the Student Worksheet to gather material for the speech.

Working with their campaign manager, the candidate should draft their speech remembering to use persuasive language and to include:

- *An opening statement introducing yourself and highlighting any relevant biographical information, e.g. 1916 Rising involvement, imprisonment, earlier campaigns etc.*
- *Outline at least three reasons why the constituents should vote for you as a Sinn Fein candidate.*
- *Address the arguments made by your Irish Parliamentary Party opponents*
- *A strong concluding point about the future of Ireland under Sinn Fein*

## *Part 4: Plenary Review:*

To conclude this lesson the students might be asked to deliver their speeches to the class. To encourage peer assessment, the teacher will ask the class for questions and feedback on the speeches. Alternatively, writing the final draft of the speech may be assigned for homework and written feedback provided.