



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



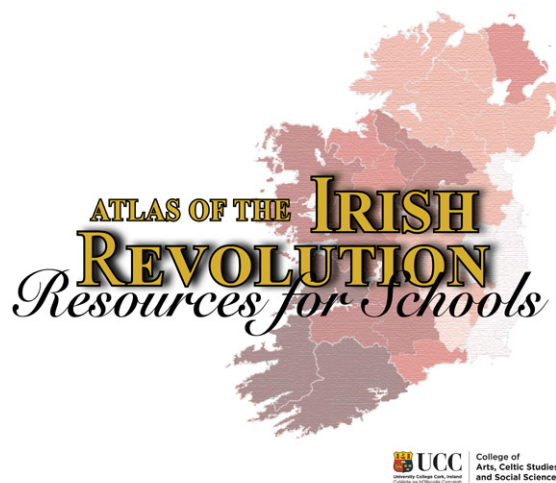
College of
Arts, Celtic Studies
and Social Sciences

Unit 8:

The Treaty and the Civil War
Dec 1921- May 1923

TEACHERS HANDBOOK

Transition Year



Transition Year Unit: The Treaty and the Civil War

MODULE OUTLINE AND PROJECT GUIDELINES

The Irish Civil War is a difficult and controversial part of Ireland's history. This Transition Year Unit, explores the causes, personalities and key moments of the fraternal conflict in which erstwhile comrades became bitter enemies. Students are encouraged to consider the conflict from the point of view of the historian by analysing primary source documents and *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* maps based on the most up-to-date data. The maps provide local and national perspectives on the conflict and allow students to consider how their own county was involved in, or affected by the Civil War. At the core of the unit, is the lesson that when examining a controversial historical topic, it is vital to evaluate sources, extract evidence and make judgements based on fact.

The Transition Year Unit is organised chronologically and guides students thorough the three phases of the Civil War in an accessible, relevant, and interesting way. Depending on the interests of the class, the teacher may decide to spent more time on one aspect of the Civil War, looking more deeply, for example, into the Battle of Dublin in June-July 1922 or the sea landings in August. The maps and documents serve as both the source material and the inspiration for the student project that forms the focal point of the unit. The student project is the production of a film based on the Irish Civil War. This may be in the form of a documentary, dramatic scenes or a combination of both and will be presented during a Transition Year film festival. As the project draws on and develops technical, digital, dramatic and writing skills, the unit lends itself well to a collaboration with teachers of English, Film Making, or Drama modules in Transition Year.

For students who intend to continue the study of history at leaving Certificate level, the module offers a valuable foundation in more advanced project work, document handling, critical thinking and writing skills. The teaching unit relates directly to the *Transition Year Mission Statement Aims and Principles* and is also strongly placed to help students develop the 'Key Skills for Senior Cycle' identified by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment as 'Information Processing', 'Communicating', 'Being Personally Effective', 'Working with Others' and 'Critical and Creative Thinking'.

AREAS OF STUDY:

Top-Up and Tasters: Bridging learning gaps and stimulating interest in Leaving Certificate Courses.

DURATION OF THE UNIT:

This outline is based on a typical Transition Year module/unit drawn from the Subject Sampling Layer of the Transition Year Curriculum: three, 40 minute classes per week for seven weeks:

Alternative modes of delivery would be as part of the interdisciplinary team teaching of a film making or drama course which might be an opt-in year long course.

Parts 2-5 of the eight-part teaching unit will require one or two classes for teacher presentation, source analysis and discussion, and written analysis.

One single class per week will be required for research, project preparation and, later, project presentation and personal assessment.

Teachers may adapt the content to their requirements, either expanding on or reducing the material as necessary.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

- o To inspire an interest in history
- o To broaden students' understanding of the Irish Civil War
- o To create a deeper understanding of the work of the historian
- o To give students hands-on experience of working with, and thinking critically about, primary and secondary source material
- o To guide students in the analysis of maps as historical sources
- o To guide students in the planning, scripting, performance and filming of a Civil War themed film
- o To develop research and digital literacy skills
- o To facilitate group work and collaboration
- o To develop communication skills

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit students should have:

- o A greater understanding of the work of the historian
- o A broader understanding of the three phases of the Irish Civil War
- o Put into practice historical research skills
- o Gained experience in working with primary and secondary source material
- o Learned to identify bias and to question the reliability of a source
- o Worked effectively as part of a group
- o Worked with film-making hardware and software
- o Depicted visually the results of their research
- o Engaged in peer and self assessment

MODULE OUTLINE

PART 1: *Introduction: (2 class periods)*

Outline the content of the History Module.
Explain the expectations and learning outcomes to the class
Present the guidelines and assessment criteria for the group project

Introducing the Project

Step 1: The Teacher explains the premise of the project:

For a long time, the Irish Civil War was not taught in schools or even spoken about by the veteran of the conflict. It was too close, too painful and too divisive. For many people the details of the conflict remain unclear because fact mixed with memory and folklore to produce a confused and vague version of the past.

RTE has commissioned a new film based on the Civil War to educate the public about the fraternal conflict. The broadcaster has stipulated the following:

- The film may be in the form of a documentary or a drama with a maximum of 3 scenes
- It may focus on the Civil War as a whole or an event/personality/battle/artefact/ painting or group associated with the Civil War
- It must be informative as well as entertaining
- It must include accurate factual detail based on research
- It must examine the topic from more than one perspective
- It must capture the atmosphere of the conflict
- It must give a sense of how the conflict affected the combatants and/or the ordinary people

Step 2: ***Production Group Meeting 1.*** In groups of not more than five, students should:

- Discuss what they already know about the Irish Civil War
- Decide if the film will be in the form of a documentary or drama
- Identify the individual strengths of each group member and decide who will take on the roles outlined in the *Cast and Crew Form*
- Group members conduct individual research into the Civil War and prepare to come to the next production meeting with proposals for the script.

Step 3: ***Production Group Meeting 2. (After approx 2 weeks of classes)***

- The production groups reassemble to discuss more informed ideas about the film. With the director as chairperson, the group should present ideas and decide on a specific topic for the documentary/storyline for the drama.
- Before the class concludes, complete the *Project Proposal Form* and submit it to the teacher.
- Based on the chosen roles, each group member should conduct research into the requirements of the role

Step 4: *Production Process*

The teacher may decide to dedicate one class per week to research and planning meetings and, later, to rehearsals, filming and editing.

Additional planning material included in the Student Project pack include a character profile sheet and a scene storyboard template.

Step 5: *Screening the Film*

Depending on time and resources, the class might decide to hold a special screening/film festival for the junior and /or senior history classes.

Audience members will receive a voting (peer assessment) card before the film begins.

If time allows, the production teams may be asked to sit for audience questions after each screening.

PART 2: *Debating the Treaty (1-2 class periods)*

Survey the class to assess prior knowledge about the Anglo Irish Treaty, 6 December 1921. A brief questions and answers session will lead reveal how much teacher-lead learning is required about the treaty negotiations and the terms of the Treaty.

Begin by playing a six-minute scene from the *Wind that Shakes the Barley* during which the characters present arguments for and against the Treaty.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Z_z6lSgB_8

Ask students to take note of at least three arguments in favour of and three against the Treaty while watching the clip. The subsequent brief class discussion will provide background for the student task. Working in pairs, students com

PART 2: *The Pact Election and the IRA Split (-3 class periods)*

These lessons are designed to enhance students' understanding of the six months between the signing of the Treaty and the outbreak of Civil War. The evacuation of the British troops from Ireland, the split in the IRA, the breakdown of the Collins- de Valera Pact and the June 1922 elections. An examination of these events through the lens of primary source documents students will better understanding the tensions in the country in early 1922 and some of the factors that eventually led to civil war.

Engagement with two *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* maps, newspaper reports, propaganda posters will help students to better understand the post-Treaty tensions on a local and national level. Working in pairs, students complete the source analysis questions that follow before completing a bar chart to represent the numbers of seats won by pro-and ant-Treaty Sinn Féin, Labour, Independents and the Farmer's Party.

PART 3: *Phase 1: The Battle of Dublin, June-July 1922 (2-3 class periods)*

During these lessons students will learn the events during the Battle of Dublin and discuss the extent to which the Anglo-Irish Treaty was responsible for the Irish Civil War. This lesson is designed to guide students in identifying the significance of the assassination in London of Major General Henry Wilson by IRA activists in June 1922. A selection of photographs, newspaper reports and maps from the *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* encourage students to consider the details and military tactics used by pro and anti-Treaty forces during the attack on the Four Courts and the fighting on O'Connell Street.

The teacher might begin by projecting the images included in the document pack relating to the Battle of Dublin. The same images are reproduced in the Student Project Book.

- Explosion at the Four Courts
- National Army (NA) artillery in action on O'Connell Street during the Battle of Dublin.
- National Army armoured car at Henry Street near Nelson's Pillar during the Battle of Dublin

Starter questions might include asking students:

- What are your immediate impressions of the different scenes?
- Do you think all the photographs were taken in the same time period, why?
- Do you recognise the uniforms?
- Can identify the locations depicted in images 1 and 2?
- What do you think is happening in image 2 and/or 3?

Using the template in the Student Worksheet, student to take a moment to consider their responses and make notes beside the relevant photographs. Once complete, ask for feedback from selected students.

Students proceed to examine the document in the project Pack and complete the comprehension and criticism questions that follow. At the conclusion of the lesson students consolidate learning by completing a graphic poster on the *Causes of the Irish Civil War*.

PART 4: *The Battle for Munster and the Death of Michael Collins (3-4 class periods)*

Class 1: During these lessons students will examine the events of Phase II of the Civil War. Examining edited extracts from the 22 July 1922 edition of National Army news sheet, *an tÓglách*, is an engaging way for students to identify National Army successes in the aftermath of the Battle of Dublin.

[The source can also be effectively compared with the extracts from IRA news sheet *Poblacht na hÉireann* in the previous lesson, as the former responds directly to information printed in the latter.]

An Atlas of the Irish Revolution map showing the events during Phase II of the Civil War ask students to use their map reading skills as the basis for a narrative of events.



[Source: National Library of Ireland, NPA CIVP8]

EXPLOSION AT FOUR COURTS, 30 JULY 1922

The destruction of the Four Courts on 30 July 1922 signalled an end to the three-day siege of the building. The IRA executive surrendered shortly afterwards, as the Four Courts began to collapse. The massive explosion sent a mushroom-cloud high above Dublin, and ash and debris showered the city centre. The detonation occurred inside the Public records office block of the Four Courts, which the IRA garrison used to store munitions. The destruction of the National Archives' priceless records and manuscripts was initially described by the pro-Treaty press as an intentional act of cultural vandalism by republican extremists. In recent years, historians have debated whether the explosion was deliberately set or if it was accidentally triggered by fires caused by National Army artillery.



[Source: Independent Newspapers Ireland/ National Library of Ireland Collection, INDH224]

NATIONAL ARMY (NA) ARTILLERY IN ACTION ON O'CONNELL STREET DURING THE BATTLE OF DUBLIN

Just before the assault on the Four Courts, the British army loaned field artillery to the Free State forces. These reliable eighteen-pounder guns enabled the NA to tackle strong IRA positions within barricaded buildings. Here, NA soldiers prepare to fire a field gun on O'Connell Street next to Nelson's Pillar. The kneeling soldier is sighting the weapon, sheltered by two armoured lorries parked on either side. Civilian bystanders look on curiously, while two soldiers sit inside the armoured lorry painted with the word 'Ashtown'. Throughout the conventional phase of the Civil War, artillery and armoured cars gave the NA a critical advantage over its republican opponents.



[Source: National Library of Ireland HoG 134]

NATIONAL ARMY ARMoured CAR AT HENRY STREET NEAR NELSON'S PILLAR DURING THE BATTLE OF DUBLIN IN LATE JUNE/EARLY JULY 1922

Attached to the car is an effigy of anti-Treaty IRA leader Rory O'Connor, reading derisively 'Rory Boy'. The British army gave thirteen of these rolls royce armoured cars to the Provisional Government in early 1922. Impervious to small-arms fire, they carried a Vickers machine gun in a rotating turret. Soldiers named them after songs, patriotic heroes or separatist victories. In the case of this armoured car, the name 'Customs House' celebrates the burning of that structure by the IRA's Dublin Brigade in May 1921, an operation many National Army officers had participated in.

Using a newspaper front page template, students work together to interpret the events during the Battle for Munster in July-August 1922 on the maps and record them in print. The task is complicated by the request that the article is written from the pro-Treaty perspective of the *Freeman's Journal*.

Class 2: In the second lesson students examine a selection of documents and an *Atlas of the Irish Revolution* map relating to the death of Michael Collins. Working together or in pairs students read document P-R and answer the comprehension questions that follow. The lesson concludes with a group work task in which students extract evidence from the map of Beal na mBlath and the newspaper report to draft a news report for the six one news giving an objective description of the ambush and its aftermath.

PART 5: Phase 3: Guerrilla Warfare

This lesson is designed to familiarise students with the last phase of the Civil War which saw a prolonged anti-Treaty IRA campaign of guerrilla warfare and economic sabotage.

The teacher may begin the lesson by projecting the photograph of Kevin O'Higgins on his wedding day and telling the story of his friendship with best man, Rory O'Connor. The story is representative of the internecine conflict that saw erstwhile friends fighting on opposite sides. The story is particularly poignant as O'Higgins was later involved in the decision to execute O'Connor, Mellows, Mc Kelvev and Barrett. The story should provoke a discussion about the reasons for enduring bitterness in the years after the civil war.

Students encounter three maps from the *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*. The first depicts events in Kerry between June 1922 and May 1923, the second documents the main incidences of anti-Treaty IRA attacks on properties of individuals associated with the Free State, and the third shows the locations of 'official' executions carried out by the Free State government after September 1922. Through interrogation of the maps students will glean an insight into the tactics used by IRA and the government's response to IRA guerrilla activities. Perhaps the most important aspect of this lesson is to provoke student discussion about the difficult decisions that were made by both sides during the conflict. The lesson concludes with a group work relating to the situation faced by anti-Treaty IRA forces in April 1923.

PART 6: In Class Project Work: (1-2 class periods per week)

Teacher facilitation of group preparation for the film

PART 7: Screening the Film, Peer and Self Assessment (1-2 class periods)

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

This unit offers the opportunity to put into practice a wide variety of teaching and learning strategies.

Atlas of the Irish Revolution Maps: The interrogation and analysis of the cartographic representation of the different aspects of the Irish Civil War

Primary Source Material: materials from the National Library of Ireland, the Bureau of Military History and variety of contemporary newspapers and images provide a deep well of sources from which to glean an insight into the period.

Group Work: The students will participate in group and pair-work during many of the classes. In groups they will examine source material in the Student Document Packs and engage in debate and discussion and plan and execute their project.

Negotiated Learning: The students will submit for approval a proposal for their own film. They will take responsibility for their own research and project work.

ICT: Much of the project work may be conducted using film-making hardware and software

Visiting Speakers: To have a historian visit the class would offer a further insights into the work of the historian and the events during the Irish Civil War.

ASSESSMENT:

Teachers will engage in both summative and formative assessment.

Throughout the module there will be ongoing assessment through oral questioning and discussion. Students are assessed on their participation and engagement in class. This is worth a percentage of their overall grade.

The main form of assessment is the project based on the Civil War Film. The projects will be completed in groups of seven or eight. Together students compile and submit a proposal for film to be completed within the deadline set by the teacher. The students will also engage in peer assessment during the screening.

At the conclusion of the unit students should also complete the student self-assessment sheet on the final page of the project pack. This is also worth a percentage of the final grade.

LINKS TO OTHER SUBJECTS:

This teaching unit presents numerous possibilities for team-teaching, cross-curricular collaboration with subject and modules such as English, Drama, Film Making, Communications, Geography and Local Studies.



EVALUATION:

Students' responses during class time will give immediate feedback to the teacher about their levels of enthusiasm and engagement. This should be a key factor in determining the success or otherwise of a section of the module. One of the central aims of the module is to enthuse the students about history and if they are not enjoying the class then it is not fulfilling the objective.
