

**IRELAND IN THE AGE OF
REVOLUTIONS: THE
REBELLION OF 1798**



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Description

Through the investigation of primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the Irish Rebellion of 1798, the role played by leading figures in the rebellion, including Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen, the reasons the French got involved in the 1798 rebellion and the subsequent consequences for the French government as a result of that involvement, and finally the legacy of the Rebellion for the Irish today.

Subjects

European History
World History

Grade Level

11-12

Duration

90 minutes

Tour Links

- Wolfe Tone Memorial, Dublin
- 1798 Rebellion Memorial, Belfast
- 1798 Memorials across Ireland

Essential Questions

- What was the Irish Rebellion of 1798?
- Who were the United Irishmen? What did they want? What link did they have to the Age of Revolutions?
- How were the French involved in the Irish Rebellion of 1798?
- Why did the Irish Rebellion of 1798 fail?
- What is the legacy of 1798 for the people of Ireland today?

Academic Summary

To subvert the tyranny of our execrable government, to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils and to assert the independence of my country- these were my objectives. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of all past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of Irishman in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter - these were my means

Theobald Wolfe Tone

To unite Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter under the common name of Irishmen in order break the connection with England, the never failing source of all our political evils. That was my aim.

Memoirs of Theobald Wolfe Tone (1826)

Our independence must be had at all hazards. If the men of property will not support us, they must fall; we can support ourselves by the aid of that numerous and respectable class of the community, the men of no property.

Memoirs of Theobald Wolfe Tone (1826)

I have laboured to abolish the infernal spirit of religious persecution, by uniting the Catholics and Dissenters. To the former I owe more than ever can be repaid. The service I was so fortunate as to render them they rewarded munificently; but they did more: when the public cry was raised against me—when the friends of my youth swarmed off and left me alone—the Catholics did not desert me; they had the virtue even to sacrifice their own interests to a rigid principle of honour; they refused, though strongly urged, to disgrace a man who, whatever his conduct towards the Government might have been, had faithfully and conscientiously discharged his duty towards them; and in so doing, though it was in my own case, I will say they showed an instance of public virtue of which I know not whether there exists another example.

Wolf Tone at his military trial, 8 Nov 1798

On 19 Nov 1798, one week after slitting his own throat to avoid being hanged by British military authorities after he was convicted of inciting rebellion and treason, Theobald Wolfe Tone, leader of the society of United Irishmen, died in Provost Prison in Dublin. His death marked the end of the Irish Rebellion of 1798. While other rebels would continue fighting using guerrilla tactics over the next few months, resistance to British authority was effectively over.

The rebellion cost the Irish dearly. Thousands of men, women and children had died across the island over the short span of 6 months. Atrocities had been committed on both sides, leaving a legacy of mistrust and hatred. Torture was used against soldiers, prisoners and civilians. Executions ensured that the leaders were dealt with, but what about the public at large? No one across the island seemed immune from the rebellion. What had started out as a movement dedicated to independence, freedom and equality for all Irish men and women based on principles from the Enlightenment, the American Revolution and the French Revolution ended in the splintering of Irish society into religious factions that still haunt Ireland today. Tone's dream of a united Ireland, free from British rule and dedicated to religious tolerance and equality, would be smashed when the British government passed official policies designed to get Catholics and Protestants to fight each other. In the end, the Rebellion of 1798 was a lost opportunity.

Through the investigation of primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the Irish Rebellion of 1798, the role played by leading figures in the rebellion, including Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen, the reasons the French became involved in the 1798 rebellion and the subsequent consequences for the French government as a result of that involvement, and finally the legacy of the Rebellion for the Irish today.

Objectives

1. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of the Irish Rebellion of 1798 and the role the United Irishmen played in the rebellion.
2. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the motives, actions and consequences of the French government's support for the rebel side in the Irish Rebellion of 1798.
3. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain how the Irish people see the Rebellion of 1798, with a particular emphasis on the views of Wolfe Tone and whether they are still relevant today.

Procedures

I. Anticipatory Set

- Writing / Question: Do people have the right to revolt against their government? Does a government have the right to put down a revolt? Who gets to decide? (5 min)
- Handouts – Copies of documents and readings from the websites listed (5 min)

II. Body of Lesson

- Lecture / PPT – The 1798 Irish Rebellion (20 min)
- Video – The Irish Rebellion of 1798 (15 min)
- Independent Activity – Students read the articles and sources on the Irish Rebellion of 1798, taking notes as appropriate. (20 min)
- Suggestion: Have the students read some of these articles and sources for homework before class.
- Group Activity – Socratic Seminar: The Irish Rebellion of 1798 and Irish National Identity (15 min)

III. Closure

- Exit Ticket / Assessment: Explain in detail the Irish Rebellion of 1798, the role played by leading figures in the rebellion, including Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen, the reasons the French government under the Directory became involved in the Irish Rebellion and the consequences for the French government as a result of that involvement, and finally the legacy of the Rebellion of 1798 for the Irish people, both Catholic and Protestant, in today's Irish society.

Extension

On tour: Various Memorials to the Rebellion of 1798 across Ireland

While on tour in Ireland, students traveling across the island will inevitably come across memorials to the 1798 Rebellion or various men and women who participated in it. They're everywhere (including a famous 10 ft. statue of Wolfe Tone in Dublin at the Wolfe Tone Memorial at the corner of St. Stephan's Green and Hume Street). As they come across such memorials, students should consider the goals of the United Irishmen, which included creating a nation-state for all the Irish regardless of their religious beliefs. Unfortunately, after the rebellion was put down by the British, Irish nationalism too often focused on divisions between Catholics and Protestants, many of which still exist today... a lost opportunity.

Web Links

Lesson Plan Websites

- www.ulsterscotsagency.com/fs/doc/teaching-resources/liberty-teacher-booklet-21.pdf
“Climb the Liberty Tree: An Exploration of the Ulster-Scots’ Role in the United Irishmen’s Rebellion of 1798.” A PDF file on the leading Ulster figures in the Irish Rebellion – excellent resource.
- www.indymedia.ie/article/82684
“1798 Rebellion and the Origins of Irish Republicanism” – website by Indimedia Ireland
- kildarelocalhistory.ie/1798-rebellion/
1798 Rebellion website by the County Kildare Federation of Local history Groups. A very comprehensive site that details every town’s involvement in the Rebellion.
- www.nationalarchives.ie/PDF/1798.pdf
“The Rebellion of 1798: Facsimile Documents” – from the National Archives of Ireland. A large PDF file containing 17 primary source documents (mostly letters) relating to events in the Rebellion of 1798 – outstanding resource for teachers and students. Also contains a one pg “Note to Teachers” – highly recommended for anyone studying the Irish Rebellion of 1798.
- stmaryscollinstown.scoilnet.ie/blog/files/2012/04/The-1798-Rebellion.ppt
The Irish Rebellion of 1798 PowerPoint from St. Mary’s School in Collinstown, County Westmeath, Ireland
- www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/irish_reb_01.shtml
“The 1798 Irish Rebellion” – article by Professor Thomas Bartlett, Chair in Irish and Scottish Studies, University of Aberdeen (UK) – on the BBC website.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=gg3NJpUVnGQ
“Anthony Kearns, The Croppy Boy” (video) – Anthony Kerns member of the Irish Tenors, singing “The Croppy Boy”, a ballad written about the 1798 rebels.
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=QfoAXoMUNjc
The Society of United Irishmen and the Irish Rebellion of 1798 (video)
- www.teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1
Reading Like a Historian: Primary Source Documents (video) – great 2 minute video on how to incorporate primary sources into the Common Core and history classes. From Shilpa Duvoor of Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City, CA – highly recommended for teachers.

Background Information

- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Rebellion_of_1798
“Irish Rebellion of 1798” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society_of_United_Irishmen
“Society of United Irishmen” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theobald_Wolfe_Tone
“Wolf Tone” – Wikipedia Article on the “Father of Irish Republicanism” and leader of the United Irishmen
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Orr
“William Orr” – Wikipedia article on the first United Irish martyr, executed in 1797
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Joy_McCracken

“Henry Joy McCracken” – Wikipedia article on one of the leaders in the Irish Rebellion

- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croppy
“Croppy” – Wikipedia article on the nickname given to Irish rebels in the 1798 rebellion
- [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defenders_\(Ireland\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defenders_(Ireland))
“Defenders (Ireland)” – Wikipedia article about a Catholic organization that united with the United Irishmen and participated in the 1798 Rebellion
- www.passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/ireland/dublin
On the Road: Dublin – from Passports Educational Travel
- www.passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/ireland/country_profile
On the Road: Country Profile of Ireland – from Passports Educational Travel

Other Relevant Passports Lesson Plans

- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/ireland/st-patrick
Early Christian Ireland – St. Patrick
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/ireland/irish-potato-famine
Great Potato Famine in Ireland 1845-1849
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/ireland/irish-rebellion-of-1798
Irish Rebellion of 1798
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/ireland/medieval-ireland-st-brendan-voyage-to-america
Medieval Ireland – Voyage of St. Brendan
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/ireland/easter-rising-of-1916
Modern Ireland (1916 - Present) – Easter Rising 1916
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/ireland/good-friday-agreement-of-1998
Modern Ireland (1916 – Present) – Good Friday Agreement 1998

Key Terms

- Catholics
- French Republic under the Directory
- Irish Rebellion of 1798
- Protestants
- Republicanism in Ireland
- Ulster
- United Irishmen
- Wolfe Tone

