

**IRELAND AND THE
GOOD FRIDAY
AGREEMENT OF 1998**



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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 details of how the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 tried to solve the Irish “Troubles”, what progress has been made in Northern Ireland since the signing of the agreement, and what issues still remain today.

Subjects

World History, European History

Grade Level

11-12

Duration

90 minutes

Tour Links

- Stormont, Belfast
- Belfast Murals and Peace Walls
- Irish Parliament, Dublin

Essential Questions

- What was the Good Friday Agreement of 1998?
- What were the “Troubles” of Ireland from 1968 to 1998?
- What issues stood in the way of implementing the Good Friday Agreement?
- Why is the island of Ireland divided? How long has it been divided?
- What religious differences divide the Irish people? Do these religious differences matter?
- Has the situation improved in Ireland since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement?

Academic Summary

Different traditions have to understand each other. Just as we must understand your yearning for a united Ireland, so too must you understand what the best of unionism is about. They are good and decent people, just like you. They want to remain part of the UK -- and I have made it clear that I value that wish. They feel threatened. Threatened by the terrorism with which they have had to live for so long. Threatened, until the Good Friday Agreement, that they would be forced into a united Ireland against the will of the people of Northern Ireland. Yet they realize now that a framework in which consent is guaranteed is also one in which basic rights of equality and justice are guaranteed, and that those who wish a united Ireland are free to make that claim, provided it is democratically expressed, just as those who believe in the Union can make their claim.

It is all about belonging. The wish of unionists to belong to the UK. The wish of nationalists to belong to Ireland. Both traditions are reasonable. There are no absolutes. The beginning of understanding is to realize that.

My point is very simple. Those urges to belong, divergent as they are, can live together more easily if we, Britain and the Irish Republic, can live closer together too.

Down through the centuries, Ireland and Britain have inflicted too much pain, each on the other. But now, the UK and Ireland as two modern countries, we can try to put our histories behind us, try to forgive and forget those age-old enmities.

We have both grown up now. A new generation is in power in each country.

Tony Blair, UK Prime Minister in a speech before the Dail Eireann (lower house of the Irish Parliament), 26 Nov 1998

On Good Friday, 10 Apr 1998, on the grounds of Stormont, the seat of governmental power in Belfast, Northern Ireland, after almost two years of heated negotiations that had threatened to break down many times, Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, and Bertie Ahern, Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of the Republic of Ireland, announced the signing of an agreement between the two countries. Formally known as the Belfast Agreement, more commonly known as the Good Friday Agreement, the document ushered in a new and unprecedented era of peace and cooperation between the long standing bitter rivals and enemies.

At the heart of the agreement was the status of Northern Ireland. When the Republic of Ireland was created in 1922, six industrialized counties in the northern part of the island voted to remain part of the United Kingdom. Much of the dispute surrounded how the people of Northern Ireland saw their individual identities. Were they Irish? Were they British? Religious identities separated Catholics and Protestants. Lines were drawn and the hatred started. The ensuing decades were filled with sporadic violence, which heated up after 1968 in what is known as the "Troubles." Throughout the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, news reports from Belfast and the surrounding towns brought stories of chaos, riots and death, but few images of peace.

In the late 1990s, as a result of pressure from around the world (especially the United States), the Irish and British governments finally agreed to sit down and to hammer out an agreement. The Good Friday Agreement was the result of those long and difficult negotiations.

Through the investigation of primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of how the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 tried to solve the Irish “Troubles”, what progress has been made in Northern Ireland since the signing of the agreement, and what issues still remain today.

Objectives

1. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998.
2. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the “Troubles” in Ireland from 1968 to 1998 and the role of each side in perpetuating the violence.
3. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the legacy of the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, the progress that’s been made in Ireland since then and the issues still remaining to be resolved.

Procedure

I. Anticipatory Set

- Writing / Question: What role does regional, national or religious identity play in a person’s life? (5 min)
- Handouts – Copies of documents and readings from the websites listed. (5 min)

II. Body of Lesson

- Lecture / PPT – Northern Ireland (20 min)
- Video – The Troubles: Northern Ireland’s Conflict (5 min)
- Independent Activity – Students read the articles and sources on the Good Friday Agreement and the Troubles, taking notes as appropriate. (25 min)
- Suggestion: Have the students read some of these articles and sources for homework before class.
- Group Activity – Socratic Seminar: The Good Friday Agreement and the Troubles (15 min)

III. Closure

- Exit Ticket / Assessment: Explain in detail the Irish “Troubles”, how the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 tried to solve them, what progress has been made in Northern Ireland since the signing of the agreement, and what issues still remain today.

Extension

On tour: Belfast Murals and Peace Walls

While on tour in Northern Ireland, students will notice murals and walls seemingly everywhere in Belfast. According to sources, there are over 2000 murals in Northern Ireland. Most of the paintings represent political views on the issues surrounding the Troubles on one side or another. In addition, “peace walls” are physical barriers that separate Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods, particularly in Belfast and Derry (where the famous “Bloody Sunday” events took place in 1972. Some are up to 25 feet high. Amazingly enough, the number and height of the walls have increased since the Good Friday Agreement was signed. According to a study by the Belfast City Council from 2012, 69% of the residents believe the walls are necessary. The Peace Walls are sometimes compared to the Berlin Wall, but instead of being imposed from a tyrannical government, these ones were put up by the residents themselves. What do the walls say about the status of relations since the Good Friday Agreement?

Web Links

Lesson Plan Websites

- news.bbc.co.uk/nol/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/07_12_04_ni_agreement_01.pdf
The Good Friday Agreement (primary source) from the BBC website
- bbc.co.uk/history/troubles
“The Troubles” (website) from the BBC
- csmonitor.com/World/Europe/2013/0205/For-Northern-Irish-republicans-life-is-hard-but-life-is-good
“For Northern Irish republicans, life is hard, but live is good” (Christian Science Monitor website) – 2013 article tries to take a hard look on the issue from both sides
- historyplace.com/speeches/blair.htm
Tony Blair: Address to the Irish Parliament, 26 Nov 1998 (website) – primary source of the speech
- iisresource.org/Documents/01_Power_sharing_Peace.pdf
“Why are Protestants and Catholics willing to Share Power in Northern Ireland now and not earlier?” PDF packet with worksheets, charts, information, maps and activities – highly recommended for teachers.
- slideshare.net/GenevieveTan3/sec-3-northernireland
Northern Ireland PowerPoint – complete and comprehensive – great information and images
- youtube.com/watch?v=Htk1BRsArRA
Bloody Sunday (Full Movie) – This movie, at 1:45, is obviously too long for most classes, but is highly recommended for teachers and students looking to gain more information on the Bloody Sunday events of 1972, popularized by the U2 song years later. The movie here, produced in 2002 by Granada Television (UK), is based on Don Mullan’s book, Eyewitness Bloody Sunday (1997), and won numerous awards.
- youtube.com/watch?v=ZB8FjC3Myzw
Good Friday Agreement on RTE (Irish State) News, 10 Apr 1998 – primary source news broadcast from Dublin
- youtube.com/watch?v=HzSTiOFndN4
The Troubles: Northern Ireland’s Conflict (video)
- 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/Good_Friday_Agreement
“Good Friday Agreement” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_ireland
“Northern Ireland” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murals_in_Northern_Ireland
“Murals in Northern Ireland” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Troubles
“The Troubles” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace_lines
“Peace Lines” – Wikipedia article about the Peace Walls of Northern Ireland
- passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/ireland/dublin
On the Road: Dublin – city facts from Passports Educational Travel
- 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

- Bloody Sunday
- Catholic
- Good Friday Agreement
- Murals
- Northern Ireland
- Peace Walls
- Protestant
- Republicans
- Sinn Fein
- The Troubles
- Unionists

