

5. Main facts

Read the text. Then work in pairs.

- **Official name:** Republic of Ireland
- **Form of government:** Constitutional Democracy
- **President:** Michael Higgins
- **Capital:** Dublin
- **Currency:** Euro
- **Population:** almost 5 million people
- **Official languages:** English and Gaelic
- **Religion:** Catholic and Protestant

(adapted from <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/geography/countries/article/ireland> and https://kiwieducation.com/ie/about_country/geography-and-climate-of-ireland/)

Ireland is known for its wide **expanses** (_____) of green fields. In fact, its nickname is the Emerald Isle, because the country is covered with greenery the whole year. Ireland has an extensive coastline, most of which is rocky.

Ireland is dominated by **plains** (_____). The main one is the vast Central Lowland. There are also low mountains in Ireland, such as Carantúill (1,041 metres). The largest **plateau** (_____) is located in the east of the country, called Antrim.

Ireland is rich in **meadows** (_____). The forest occupies about 12% of the island's territory.

The climate is oceanic, **mild** (_____) and temperate. It is quite humid, and the winds are mostly warm, giving Ireland mild winters and cool summers.

Irish **wildlife** (_____) is protected by government conservation programs. To preserve natural habitat, the government has established six national parks.

St. Patrick's Day—observed every March 17—is celebrated with parades, good luck **charms** (_____), and all things green.

Did you know that there are no wild snakes in Ireland? The sea has stopped many animals common on **mainland** (_____) Europe from reaching the island.

Archaeologists think the first people to **settle** (_____) in Ireland arrived around 6000 B.C. Around 700 B.C. the Celts began to settle the island.

In the 9th century A.D. Viking raids began into Ireland. The Vikings and Celts fought for 200 years until a battle in 1014 united the country.

In the early 1600s, England's official religion became Protestant while most Irish remained Roman Catholic. This would create tensions that would eventually **lead to** (_____) revolution and Ireland's independence.

In 1922, after violent **uprisings** (_____), the Irish Free State was created within the British Empire.

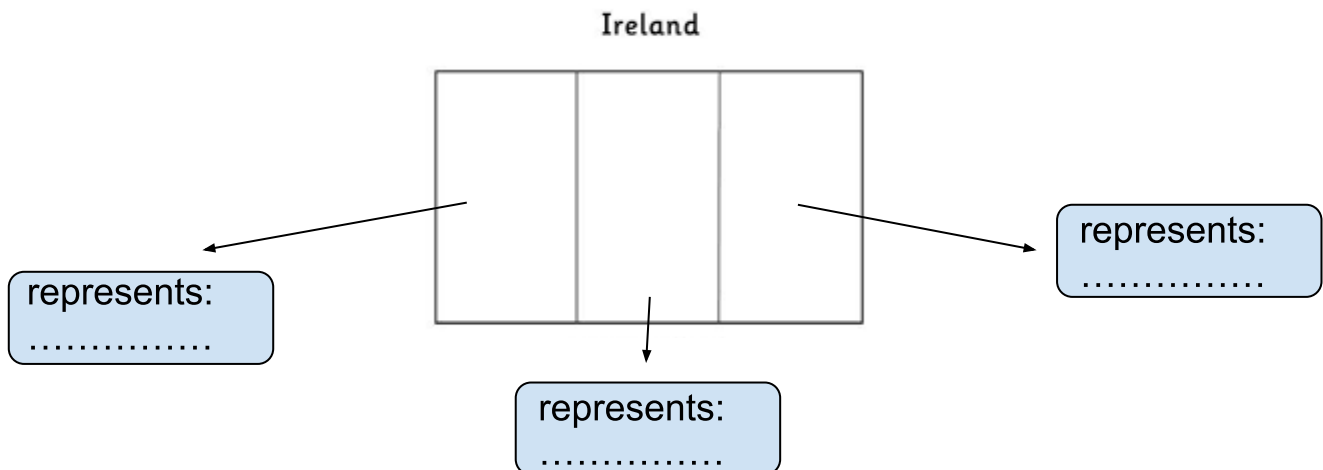
The Irish flag is made of three vertical stripes: the green represents the Catholic community, the orange one the Protestant community and white one is for peace and unity.

Exercise 5. R. Match the definitions. Then insert the correct synonyms into the text. (<https://www.thesaurus.com>)

expanse
plain
plateau
meadow
mild
wildlife
charm
mainland
to settle
lead to
uprising

area
level land
highland
grassy field
temperate
animals
talisman
continent
to establish
to conduct to
rebellion

Exercise 6. Color the flag and describe its symbols.



Exercise 7. S. Ask each other questions about the main facts about Ireland. Here are some examples:

- What's the nickname of Ireland? Why is that?
- How many official languages are there in Ireland?
- What's the main plain of Ireland?
- How is the Irish climate?
- What does the government protect with conservation programs?
- When did the Celts arrive in Ireland?
- ...