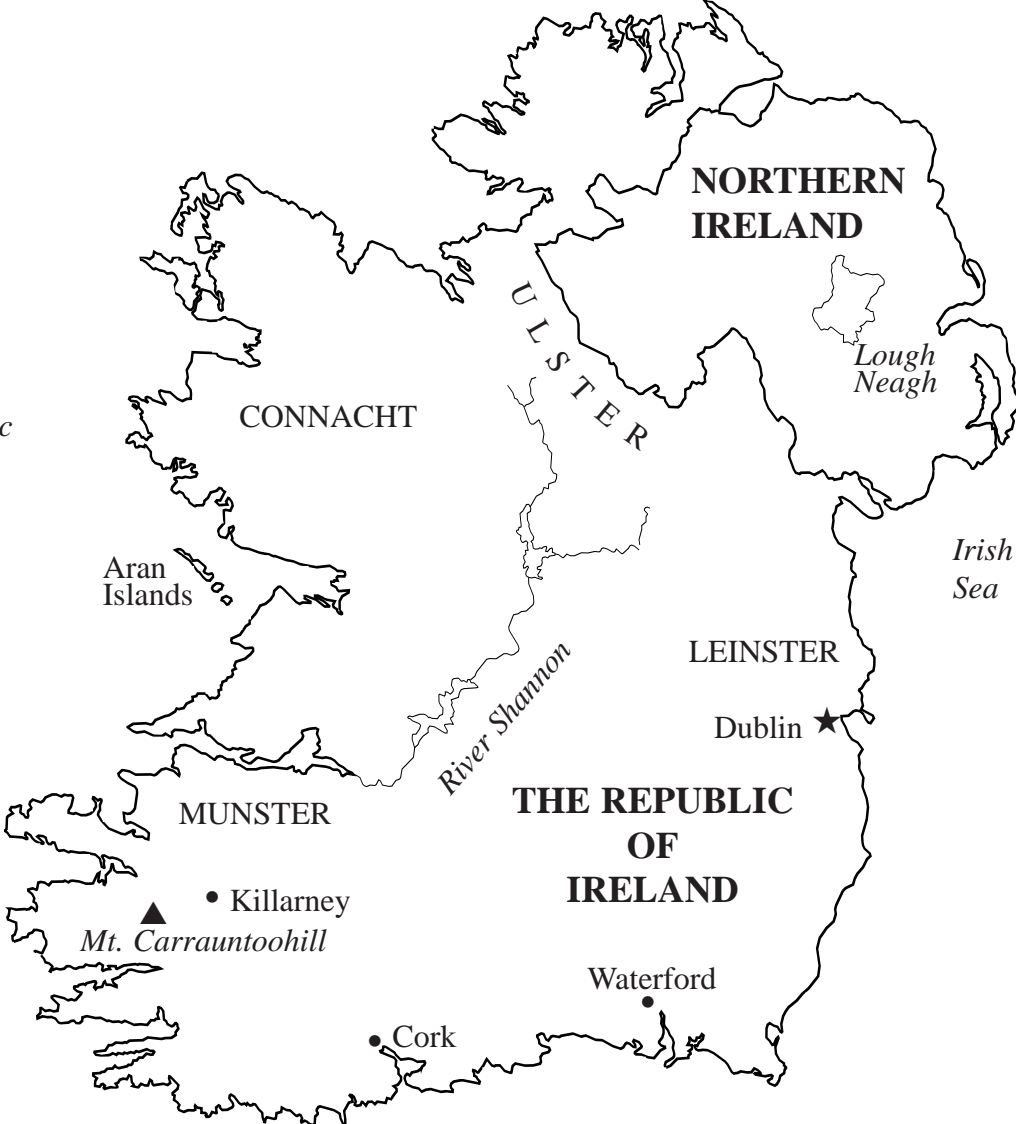


Table of Contents

The Republic of Ireland.....	1
Physical Features	3
History	6
Daily Life	10
Language and Expressions	12
Holidays and Festivals.....	14
Foods	15
Creative Arts	17
Sports and Games	23
Additional Resources	25

IRELAND



*North
Atlantic
Ocean*

*Aran
Islands*

CONNACHT

**NORTHERN
IRELAND**

*Lough
Neagh*

ULSTER

*Irish
Sea*

LEINSTER

Dublin ★

**THE REPUBLIC
OF
IRELAND**

MUNSTER

• Killarney

▲ *Mt. Carrauntoohill*

Waterford

• Cork

*North
Atlantic
Ocean*



The Republic of Ireland

The earliest-known inhabitants of Ireland came from the European continent at the end of the Ice Age, about eight thousand years ago. The search for food led these early people along Europe's western coast to Scotland. From there, they crossed an ice bridge on foot or sailed over open water in primitive boats to the northeast coast of Ireland. At first, they lived a nomadic life, killing animals and catching fish for food. Gradually they learned how to plant and grow food, and they established communities.

A large number of Ireland's people continue to tend the earth today. Although it comprises only a small part of Europe, Ireland has given the world an abundance of fine literature, poetry, scholars, music, and art. The Republic of Ireland, which is independent, consists of twenty-six counties and covers 85 percent of the island. Northern Ireland, which is governed by the United Kingdom, consists of six counties. Four ancient provinces are still recognized: Ulster, Connacht, Leinster, and Munster.

Area—27,136 square miles (70,283 square kilometers)

The Republic of Ireland is approximately the same size as the state of Maine.

It measures almost 300 miles (483 kilometers) from north to south and 175 miles (282 kilometers) from east to west.

Population—3,791,000 (*estimate*)

Approximately 59 percent of the people live in cities and the remaining 41 percent live in rural areas (*farms*).

Major Cities

Dublin, the capital and most heavily populated city

Cork, the second largest city, located near a seaport

Killarney, famous for its lakes

Waterford, port and center for Waterford Crystal

Climate—mild

Summer high temperatures: 60s

Winter low temperatures: 40s

Language—Irish, sometimes called Gaelic, is the official language of the country. It is spoken mainly in the western, southern, and part of the central regions of Ireland. English, the second language, is spoken and written throughout Ireland.

Religion—Approximately 95 percent of the Irish are Roman Catholics. Other religions represented are Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian.

Flag—three vertical bands

The left band is green.

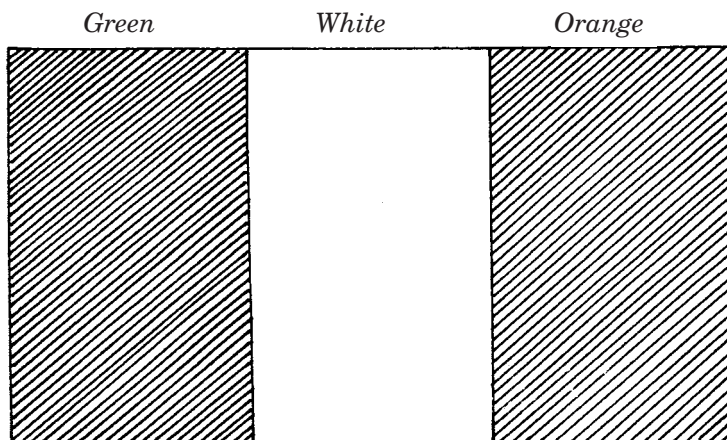
It symbolizes the Celts and modern Catholics.

The right band is orange.

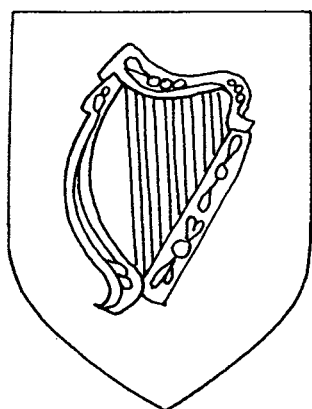
It symbolizes the English King William of Orange and modern Protestants.

The center band is white.

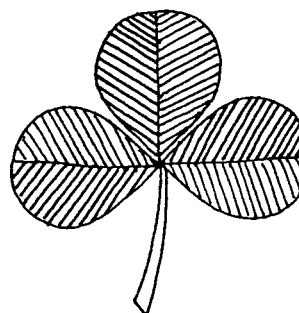
It symbolizes the search for peace between the Catholics and Protestants.



Coat of Arms—Irish harp on a shield



National Flower—shamrock, a type of three-leafed clover



In Your Classroom

Show students a large map of Europe and help them locate Ireland. Ask them to compare its size to other European countries, such as Germany and France.

Show students a map of the United States. Locate the state of Maine, which is about the same size as Ireland. Help them draw conclusions about the differences between an island and a larger country.