



Children & The 1916 Rising

HISTORY AND ENGLISH

Introduction

This extract shows how ordinary civilians became involved in the 1916 Rising. This activity will help pupils to develop their reading and writing skills.

Activity - Reading Comprehension

Note to Teachers:

Elements in blue are for younger children/those who may need additional support. Older and more able pupils can use all elements.

'On Easter Monday, 24th April 1916, P. H. Pearse, James Connolly and other rebels drawn from different groups took over the GPO. Even though it was a holiday, the Post Office had to be open for urgent business. Staff and customers downstairs in the GPO were forced to leave at gunpoint and Patrick Pearse, standing at the front of the building, read the Proclamation declaring Ireland independent from Britain. Most people at the time were not very interested in what he was saying and didn't expect a week of fighting and destruction to follow.

Upstairs, in the Telegraph Room, the staff had noticed that something was wrong when their telegraph lines were suddenly disconnected. When they heard the rebels enter the GPO, they barricaded themselves into their room, did their best to inform the police and the Government what was happening and refused to leave until shots were fired at them by the rebels.

One Post Office worker, Miss Gordon, insisted on looking after an unarmed soldier who had been shot by the rebels. She promised the rebels that, if she could take the man down the street to hospital, she would bring him back to be a prisoner. Even though the hospital staff urged her not to, she kept her word and returned to the GPO with the young soldier. She was then allowed to go home while he stayed on as a prisoner.'

Source:

www.anpost.ie/historyandheritage

Questions

1. On what date did the Easter Rising take place?
2. Who raided the GPO? Why?
3. Name the two rebels mentioned in the passage.
4. Why did the Post Office worker, Miss Gordon ask to look after the unarmed soldier?
5. Why did she return to the GPO after leaving?
6. Would you have returned to the building if you were Miss Gordon? Why?/ Why not?
7. Why do you think the rebels chose to have the Rising on Easter Monday?
8. What was the proclamation?
9. How did the staff know that something unusual was happening in the GPO? How did they respond?
10. Explain the meaning of the following words from the passage. You can use a dictionary to help you.
(i). urgent (ii). independent (iii). telegraph (iv). barricaded (v). insist (vi). unarmed



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1916 Centenary Stamps



Show the children the stamp with the photograph of Louisa Nolan. In pairs, ask them to discuss her appearance and to discuss what role she may have had in the rising. After a class discussion inform the children that...

'This stamp shows a photograph of Louisa Nolan. Louisa worked as a showgirl in Dublin's Gaiety Theatre. She risked her life looking after the wounded at the battle of Mount Street Bridge.'



Show the photograph of Sean Foster. Explain that...

'Many innocent civilians were killed during the Rising. Sean was one of the youngest of 40 children killed during Easter Week. Many were killed as they tried to scavenge for food. Sean was killed during an exchange of fire between Irish volunteers and British Army soldiers.'

Have a brief whole class discussion about how ordinary people's lives were affected. Focus on daily life during Easter Week – how people may have struggled to get food, get logs for the fire, move about, etc.

Write about it!

For younger classes

Ask the children to design and draw their own stamp for the 1916 Rising. They can design it based on Louisa Nolan, Sean Foster or Miss Gordon. Then, ask them to write a sentence or more, describing the person they have chosen and their role in the 1916 Rising.

For older classes/more able students

Using the above passage and information in 'The Post Office and 1916' within the Education Section of www.anpost.ie/historyandheritage ask the children to write a diary entry from the point of view of either Louisa Nolan, Sean Foster, Miss Gordon, Patrick Pearse or James Connolly. Describe the actions of that person on Easter Monday 1916. How they felt? What they may have seen, heard, and experienced?

Suggested additional tasks

- Ask the children to write a letter to a friend, from the point of view of one of the above people, explaining why you took your course of action on Easter Monday.
- Read a children's story to the class, which is based on the 1916 Rising.
- Organise a visit to the **GPO Witness History Visitor Centre** www.gpowitnesshistory.ie/visit/ Ask the children to prepare questions for the visit.
- Enter the **An Post/INTO Handwriting Competition**. Use the writing activity above or get your pupils to write their own composition in any genre using the theme 'Children & the 1916 Rising.' For more information visit www.anpostschoolbag.ie/competition



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HISTORY AND ENGLISH

Curriculum links

History

- Study a range of people and events in the past in order to develop a balanced understanding of national history
- Use imagination and evidence to reconstruct elements of the past
- Communicate historical understanding in a variety of ways, using appropriate language and other techniques or media
- Develop an appreciation of the perspectives and motives of people in the past and accept that individuals and events should be understood in their historical context
- Be aware that the attitudes and behaviour of people may be influenced by their understanding of the past and by their past experiences
- Respect and value a range of opinions and acquire open, questioning attitudes to the beliefs, values and motivations of others

English

- Expand his/her vocabulary
- Explore and develop ideas and concepts through talk, directed discussion and writing
- Identify and evaluate the key points, issues and central meaning of a text and organise efficiently the information gained
- Organise, clarify, interpret and extend experience through writing
- Express intuitions, feelings, impressions, ideas and reactions in response to real situations through talk, discussion and writing