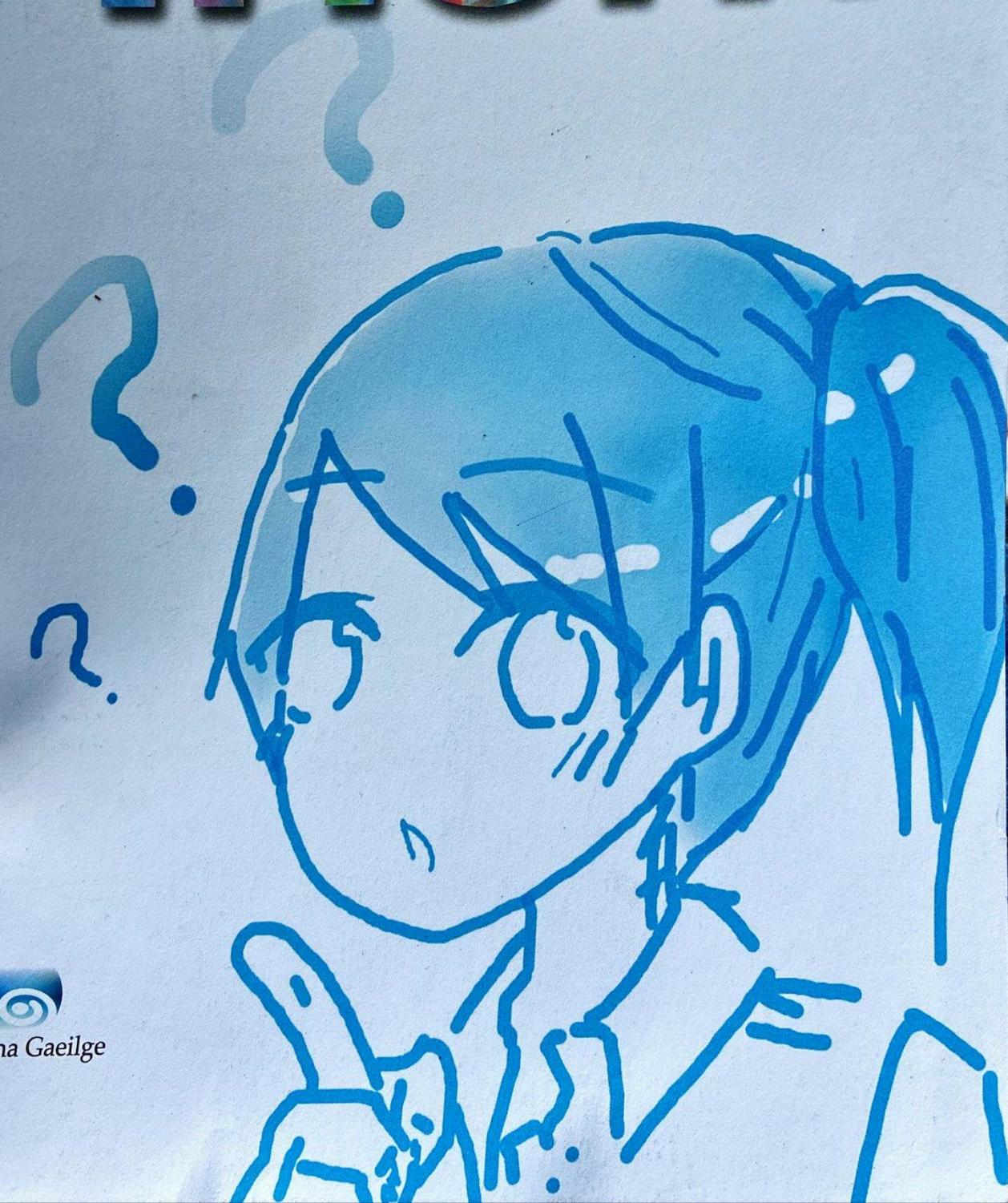


Want to find out more about  
Irish?

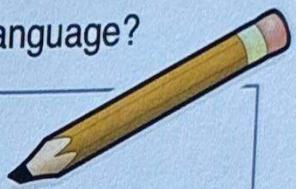


Foras na Gaeilge

# Want to find out more about Irish?



What do you and your friends know already about the Irish language?



Which of the following statements are true or false?

Write T or F (True or False) beside each one.

- 1 St. Patrick was a native Irish speaker.
- 2 The Irish language is related to no other languages.
- 3 In 1801 50% of people in Ireland could speak only Irish!
- 4 There are 10,000 speakers of Irish in America!
- 5 The traditional Irish alphabet uses only 18 letters  
– 5 vowels and 13 consonants.
- 6 In Irish girl is masculine!
- 7 Limavady is named after a stunt a dog performed!
- 8 Irish was spoken here long before Christianity arrived.
- 9 Irish is a university subject all across the world!
- 10 5,000 pupils are taught through Irish at present.

Turn over to find out

- 1 FALSE.** Saint Patrick was a Roman Briton so he probably spoke a British Celtic language and Latin. He would have had to learn Irish when he came here. There was no such thing as the English language in his time.
- 2 FALSE.** The Irish language is closely related to Scottish Gaelic and Manx Gaelic, and more distantly to Welsh, Cornish and Breton. These are all Celtic languages. Celtic languages in turn are related to over 400 other Indo-European languages, including English, German, French, Spanish, Russian, Armenian, Albanian, Hindustani and Sanskrit.
- 3 TRUE.** While 50% of the Irish population in 1801 knew only Irish about 80% in total could speak Irish, with 30% speaking both Irish and English. Only 20% of the Irish population could not speak Irish at that time.
- 4 FALSE.** According to a recent census, up to 26,000 Americans speak Irish regularly!
- 5 TRUE.** Traditionally letters j, k, q, v, w, x, y, z were not used in Irish, although these are now used for loanwords and scientific terms.
- 6 TRUE.** Believe it or not, the Irish word for girl, cailín, is masculine! Like French and German, Irish words are masculine or feminine. Sometimes a feminine object, like a girl, is represented by a masculine word, and vice-versa.
- 7 TRUE.** Limavady comes from the Irish Léim an Mhadaidh, which means the dog's leap. The town is near where, according to legend, a dog jumped a steep gorge on the River Roe to bring a warning message to his master, a chieftain.
- 8 TRUE.** Irish has been spoken here for at least 2,500 years, maybe longer.
- 9 TRUE.** Up to 4,000 students study Irish at university annually in universities across the world such as Notre Dame, Harvard, Prague, Lublin, Freiburg, Rennes, Utrecht, Beijing, Sydney and many more. Can you find out what countries these are in?
- 10 FALSE.** In fact there are over 50,000 pupils attending Irish-medium schools, where all the subjects are taught through Irish. Many thousands more pupils are learning Irish in English medium schools too. Pupils also visit Irish language summer colleges in Irish-speaking regions called the Gaeltacht, as well as local Irish-language summer camps.

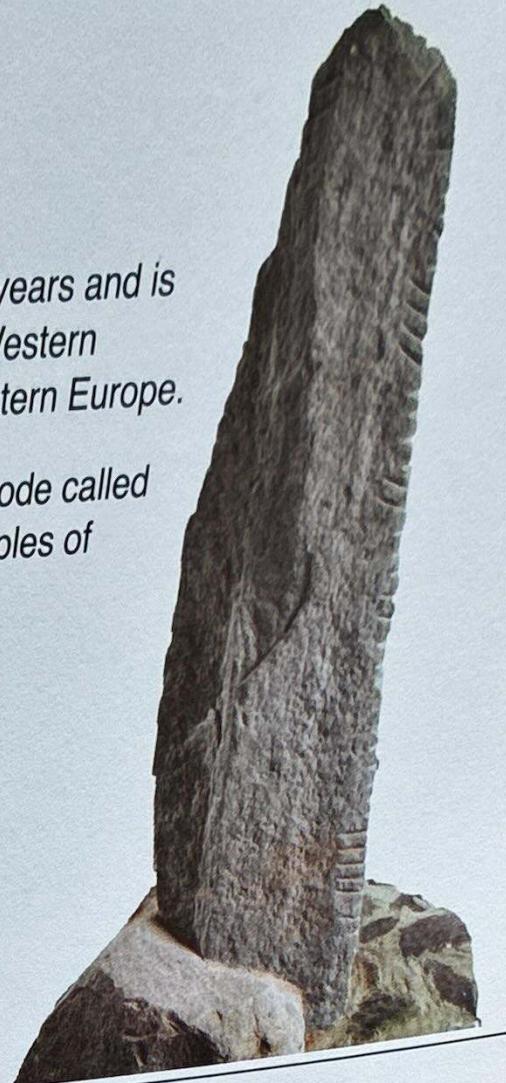
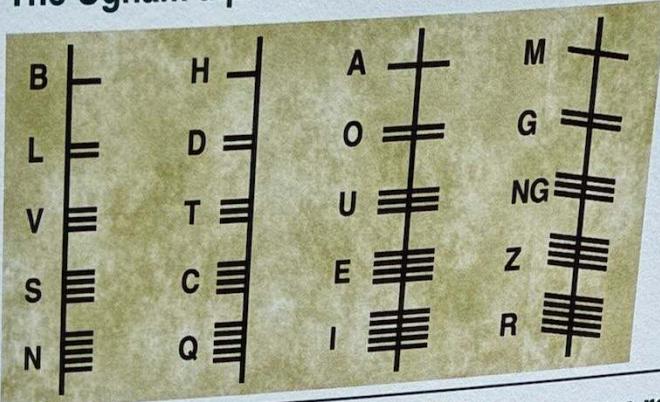


# Did you know?

Irish has been spoken here for thousands of years and is the oldest continuously spoken language in Western Europe. It also has the oldest literature in Western Europe.

Early Irish speakers created their own writing code called Ogham (pronounced O-am). The earliest examples of written Irish are in Ogham.

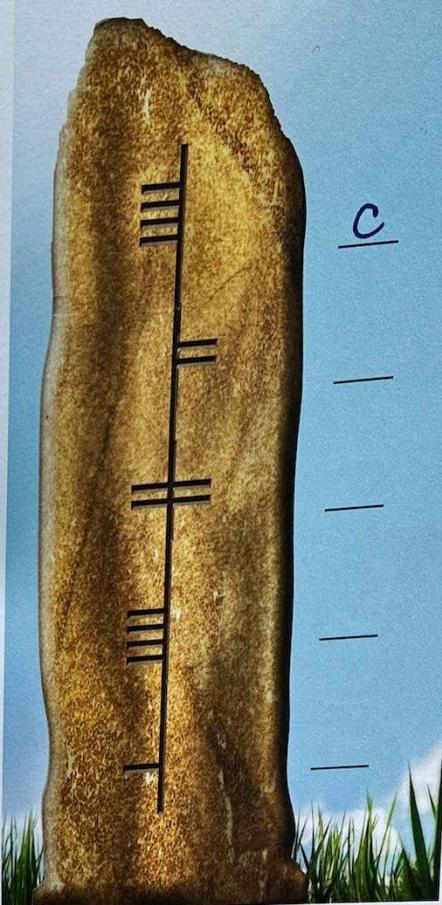
## The Ogham alphabet



### Can you read the message?

The Irish word for stone is written in ogham script in the picture opposite. Use the ogham alphabet to work out what the letters are and write the Irish word in the space below.

Now you know what the Irish word for stone is. Can you write your own name and a friend's in ogham script? Have a go here.



C



# Some Irish language facts!

- Irish, also known as Gaelic or Irish Gaelic, has been spoken here for more than 2,500 years.
- A long time ago it spread to Scotland and to the Isle of Man where it developed into Scottish Gaelic and Manx Gaelic.
- While it has declined in the last 160 years it is still spoken all over Ireland, especially in the Gaeltacht (gale-taught). The Gaeltacht is made up of regions where Irish is still the daily language of most people.
- In recent years Irish has been making a comeback in many places and is now an official language of the European Union.
- Many young people like you are educated through Irish, or learn Irish at school and at summer colleges near their home or in the Gaeltacht.



# What do you think the following people have in common?



## Answer:

they have all learned  
and used some Irish!

- Queen Elizabeth said this when she visited Dublin in 2012: '**A Uachtaráin agus a chairde**'. This means 'President and friends'.
- When the former American President, Barack Obama, visited Dublin in 2011 he said '**Is féidir linn**', which means, 'Yes we can'.
- Chris Hadfield, the Canadian astronaut, tweeted from space, '**Tá Éire fíor-álainn. Go raibh maith agaibh**', which means, 'Ireland is beautiful. Thank you all'.
- Ed Sheeran has this tattoo: '**Is tú mo réalt eolais**', which means, 'You're my guiding star'.

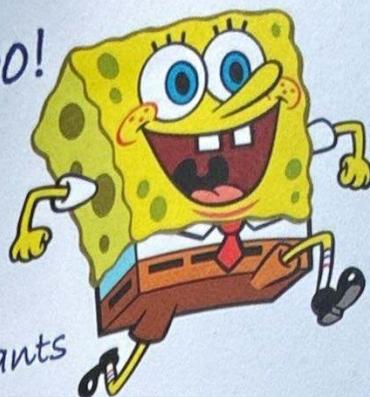


Do you know that these cartoon characters  
are fluent in Irish too!

Did you know there is an  
Irish language television station?



Sponge Bob Squarepants



Go to TG4.ie (Cúla4)  
and find out more!

Go to  
<http://www.tg4.ie/assets/games/mr-men/html/index.html>



Mr Men & Little Miss



See if you can find the Irish for these  
Mr Men and Little Miss:

Mr Strong      Mr \_ á\_ \_ \_ \_ r

Mr Quiet      Mr \_ \_ \_ \_ n

Mr Nosey      Mr F\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ h

Miss Scary      Miss \_ c \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

Mr Rude      Mr \_ r \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ é \_ \_ \_ \_



Mr Strong = Mr Láidir    Mr Quiet = Mr Cíulin    Mr Nosey = Mr Fiosraigh    Miss Scary = Miss Scáiril    Mr Rude = Mr Drochbhéasach

ANSWERS

# You may know some Irish already!

Did you know that the English language has been greatly influenced by Irish and contains many words of Irish origin today.

Which of the following words do you know?

Can you match them with their meanings? One has been done for you.

- |                            |               |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Galore (go leor)        | old house     |
| 2. Craic (craic)           | water of life |
| 3. Shanty (seantigh)       | plenty        |
| 4. Smithereens (smidiríni) | fun           |
| 5. Smashing (is maith sin) | mouth         |
| 6. Gob                     | that's good   |
| 7. Puck (poc)              | shoe          |
| 8. Brogue (bróg)           | to strike/hit |
| 9. Whiskey (uisce beatha)  | small pieces  |

## Answers

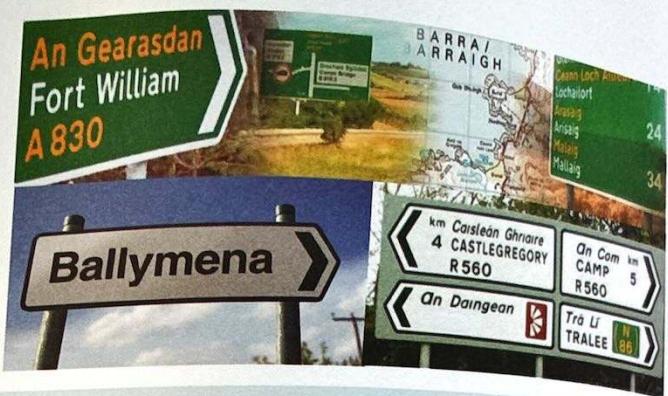
1. Galore (go leor) PLENTY
2. Craic (craic) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Shanty (seantigh) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Smithereens (smidiríni) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Smashing (is maith sin) \_\_\_\_\_
6. Gob \_\_\_\_\_
7. Puck (poc) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Brogue (bróg) \_\_\_\_\_
9. Whiskey (uisce beatha) \_\_\_\_\_

- ANSWERS
- |                  |              |                    |                            |                         |              |                       |                |                            |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Galore=plenty | 2. Craic=fun | 3. Shanty=oldhouse | 4. Smithereens=smallpieces | 5. Smashing=that's good | 6. Gob=mouth | 7. Puck=to strike/hit | 8. Brogue=shoe | 9. Whiskey = water of life |
|------------------|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------------|

# Places and Names

Most of our placenames are of Gaelic origin

Find the Gaelic spelling of the places on the map?



- Ardglass
- Dundonald
- Ballymena
- Templepatrick
- Lough Neagh
- Stranraer
- Dundee
- Edinburgh
- Loch Ness
- Shannon
- Limerick
- Cork
- Douglas
- Sligo
- Stornoway

Ard Gháis

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Answers:

Ardglass=Ar Gháis, the green hill.  
Dundonald=Dùn Dónaill, Donaill's fort.  
Ballymena=An Baile Meánach, the middle town.  
Templepatrick=Teampall Phádraig, Patrick's church.  
Lough Neagh=Loch Neagh, the lake of the nose.  
Stranraer=Dun Tsin Reamhar, the fort of the river Ness.  
Dundee=Dùn Èideann, Dun Èdeann, Edinburgh's fort.  
Loch Ness=Loch Nis, the lake of the river Ness.  
Shannon=Sliomheach, the river of Sliomha.  
Umerwick=Córraigh, marsh.  
Sligo=Sligeach, abounding in shells.  
Douglas=Dooilish, same as the Irish Duibhlais, black water.  
Stornoway=Sliomhabhagh, from the Norse Sjörmarvægr.

# Knowing some keywords will help you work out part of the placename meaning of many of our towns.

Part of placename	Irish form	Meaning
bally	baile	town
bawn	bán	white
beg	beag	small
carn	carn	mound
carrick	carraig	rock
kill	cill	church
drum	droim/droma	ridge
duff	dubh	black
dun/down	dún	fort
glen	gleann	glen
ennis	inis	island/river meadow
loch	loch	lake
more	mór	big
mullagh	mullach	hilltop
rath	ráth	fort
shan	sean	old
sliieve	sliabh	mountain
tyr	tír	country

**Detective work:** Can you work out what the following placenames mean?

## Match the place to its translations

Example: Downpatrick (Dún Pádraig) means **Patrick's fort**

- |                                       |                       |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Downpatrick (Dún Pádraig)          | the big hilltop       |
| 2. Dundrum (Dún Droma)                | the big fort          |
| 3. Mullaghbawn (An Mullach Bán)       | the big rock          |
| 4. Ballybeg (An Baile Beag)           | the old church        |
| 5. Carrickfergus (Carraig Fhearghais) | Patrick's fort        |
| 6. Mullaghmore (An Mullach Mór)       | the fort of the ridge |
| 7. Dromore (An Droim Mór)             | the small town        |
| 8. Shankill (Seanchill)               | Fergus's rock         |
| 9. Rathmore (An Ráth Mór)             | the big ridge         |
| 10. Carrickmore (An Charraig Mhór)    | the white hilltop     |

Do you know any placenames that have some of the words from the list above in them? Go to [www.logainm.ie](http://www.logainm.ie) and [www.placenamesni.org](http://www.placenamesni.org) for more help.  
Write your findings here:

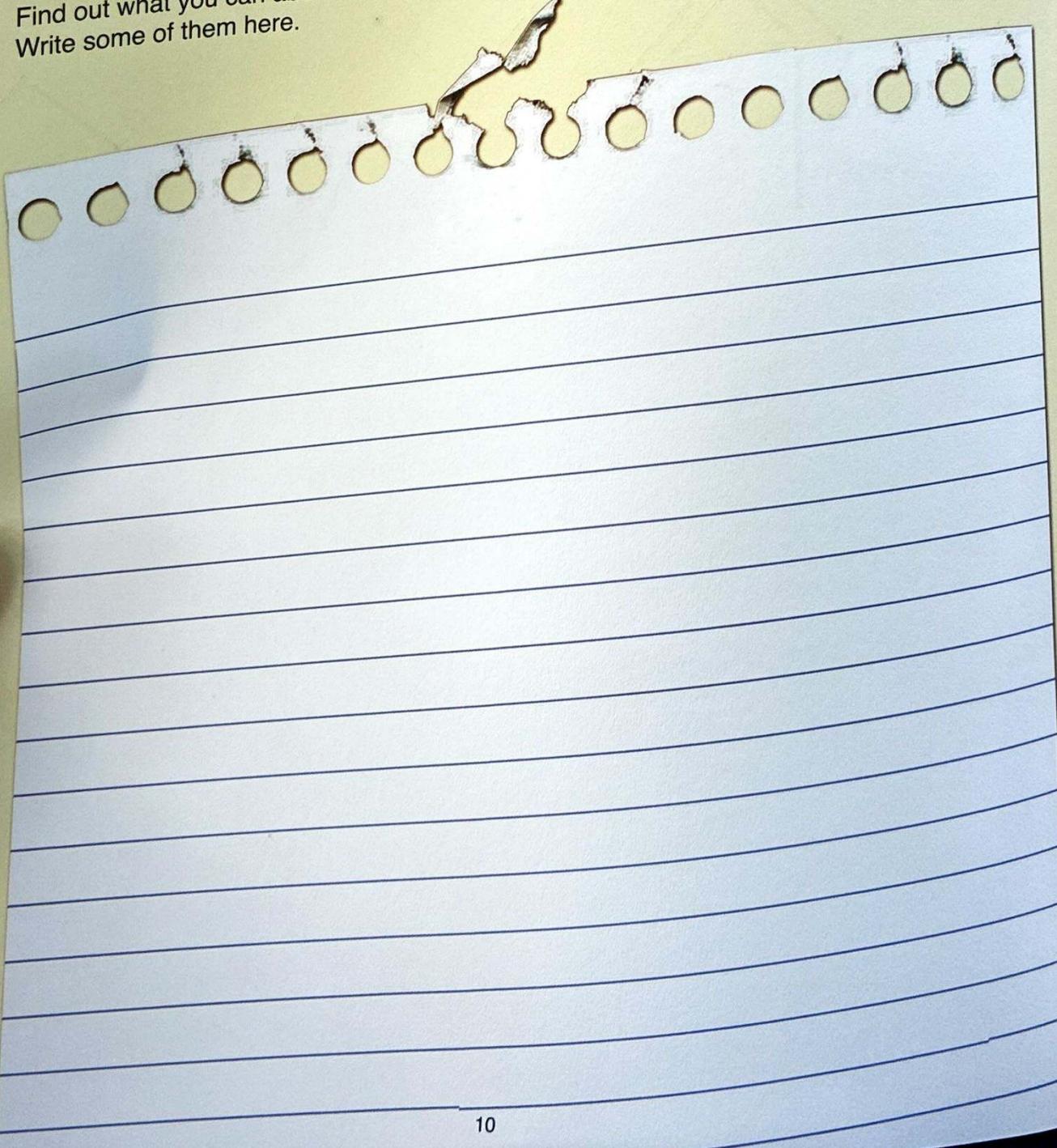
ANSWERS: 1. Downpatrick (Dún Pádraig) = Patrick's fort. 2. Dundrum (Dún Droma) = the fort of the ridge. 3. Mullaghbawn (An Mullach Bán) = the white hilltop. 4. Ballybeg (An Baile Beag) = the small town. 5. Carrickfergus (Carraig Fhearghais) = Fergus's rock. 6. Mullaghmore (An Mullach Mór) = the big hilltop. 7. Dromore (An Droim Mór) = the big ridge. 8. Shankill (Seanchill) = the old church. 9. Rathmore (An Ráth Mór) = the big fort. 10. Carrickmore (An Charraig Mhór) = the big rock.

# Surnames

Many of our surnames have Gaelic roots. It can be really interesting to find out what they mean. Take a look at these:

<b>Campbell</b>	<i>Mac Cathmaoil or Caimbèul</i>	Son of the Cathmhaol (battle-chief) or crooked mouth
<b>Doherty</b>	<i>Ó Dochartaigh</i>	Descendant of the harmful/hurtful one
<b>Gillespie</b>	<i>Mac Giolla Easpug</i>	Son of the servant of the bishop
<b>McGowan</b>	<i>Mac Gabhann</i>	Son of the blacksmith
<b>McTaggart</b>	<i>Mac an tSagairt</i>	Son of the priest
<b>Duffy</b>	<i>Ó Dufaigh</i>	Descendant of the dark headed one

Find out what you can about the surnames of your friends and family on [www.sloinne.ie](http://www.sloinne.ie). Write some of them here.



# More interesting facts about Irish

Did you know that there are no words for **yes** and **no** in Irish?  
It doesn't mean that yes/no questions can't be answered.  
You must use the verb in the question. For example:

Will you do your homework tonight? I won't do!  
*An ndéanfaidh tú d'obair bhaile anocht? Ní dhéanfaidh*

Will you go swimming after school. I will go.  
*An rachaidh tú ag snámh tar éis na scoile? Rachaidh mé*

Irish has several ways of counting:  
one for counting humans,  
another for counting animals and non-living things  
(house pets are a borderline case, they can go either way!)  
and lastly, for just numbers on their own.  
So, in Irish we can say *ceathrar buachaillí*, four boys,  
*ceithre thábla*, four tables or *a ceathair*, four (when counting).  
So Irish has three words for the number four!

Irish has no word for "to have". To say you have something  
in Irish you say that it is at you.  
You can't say in Irish "I have a pen".  
You have to say "There is a pen at me"! *Tá peann agam!*

If you get the flu you can't say in Irish that you have it.  
Instead you would say "The flu is on me"! *Tá an fliú orm!*

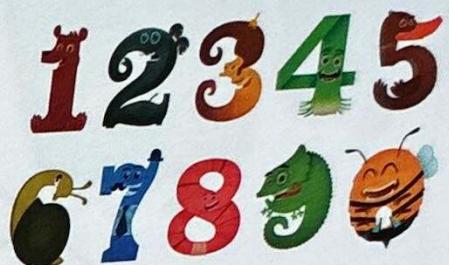
To say you like something in Irish you have to say  
"It is good with me"! *Is maith liom é!*

Did you know there are some really nasty curses in Irish?  
Take a look at these:  
*'Go n-ithe an cat thíu agus go n-ithe an diabhal an cat'*  
May the cat eat you and the devil eat the cat.

Here's a simile:  
*'Chomh bréan le pluais an tsionnaigh'*  
As smelly as a fox's den.

There are plenty of Irish language superstitions:  
*Má ghlaonn tú muc ar dhuine beidh straois muice ag do ghasúir.*  
If you call someone a pig, your children will have a pig's sneer.

TÁ  
NÍL  
THÓG  
NÍOR THÓG



# Legends

There are brilliant legends that have been handed down in Irish through generations.

Have you heard of Cúchulainn, one of Ulster's greatest heroes?

Did you know that his name comes from Irish:

**Cú** meaning a hound and **Culann** who was a blacksmith!

What do you know about Cúchulainn? Check out <http://navanfortapp.com/category/mythology/>

Do you know any other Irish myths or legends?

gorm

Colour in the picture with these colours. Can you also say them?

Dearg  
(jarrag)

Buí  
(bwee)

Gorm  
(gorrum)

Bán  
(bwaan)

Glas  
(glass)

Dubh  
(dooh)

Donn  
(dun)

Bándearg  
(bwaan-jarrag)

Corcra  
(korkra)

Liath  
(leeah)



# Learn to speak some Irish yourself

Practice this conversation with a friend:

**Cad é mar atá tú?** (Ka-jay mara taw too) How are you?

**Go maith** (Guh mye) Good!

**Ceart go leor** (Kyart go lyower) Alright!

**Go holc** (go hulk) Awful!

**Cé thusa?** (Kay hussa) Who are you?

**Is mise.....**(is misha...Put your name in here) I am ...

**Cé as thú?** (Kay ass who?)

**Is as Béal Feirste mé!** (is ass Bayle Farshtya may)

I am from Belfast. (Put your own home town in) **Is as ..... mé!**

**Le do thoil** (leh duh hull) Please

**Go raibh maith agat** (Gura mye ugut) Thank you!

**Chífidh mé thú** (cheefee may who) I'll see you!

**Slán!** (Slawn) Goodbye



Try to have a conversation with your classmate.

Write out your conversation below

Try the numbers:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A haon,	a dó,	a trí,	a ceathair,	a cúig,	a sé,	a seacht,	a hocht,	a naoi,	a deich
A hayn,	a daw,	a tree,	a kya-hirr,	a koo-ig,	a shay,	a shaght,	a hoght,	a nee,	a jaygh

Have you learned anything interesting or surprising about the Irish language?

Write it here:

## ANSWERS

Want to find out more about Irish?  
Pages 1 and 2

Did you know? Page 3

Some Irish language facts! Page 4

What do you think the following people have in common? Page 5

Do you know that these cartoon characters are fluent in Irish too?  
Page 6

You may know Irish already. Page 7

Places and Names. Pages 8-9

Surnames. Page 10

More interesting facts about Irish.  
Page 11

Legends. Page 12

For more information on the Irish language contact



## Foras na Gaeilge

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[www.forasnagaeilge.ie](http://www.forasnagaeilge.ie)

Placenames: [logainm.ie](http://logainm.ie), [placenamesni.org](http://placenamesni.org), [gaelicplacenames.org](http://gaelicplacenames.org)

Surnames: [sloinne.ie](http://sloinne.ie)

Online dictionaries: [www.focal.ie](http://www.focal.ie), [www.focloir.ie](http://www.focloir.ie)

Irish language television: TG4.ie

Liofa: <https://www.liofa.eu/>

App to learn Irish:

<https://www.duolingo.com/course/ga/en/Learn-Irish-Online>

Le buíochas/With thanks:



Michal Boleslav Měchura