

# Company culture in Ireland

COMMUNICATION

LEVEL  
Upper-intermediate

NUMBER  
EN\_BE\_3911X

LANGUAGE  
English

lingoda





## Goals

- Can understand typical business culture and conduct in Ireland
- Can read and understand a text about small talk etiquette in Ireland



Most people have certain stereotypes  
in mind when they hear about **Ireland**,  
but the reality of Ireland is an  
**economic powerhouse** where more  
and more companies are **doing**  
**business**.



## Preview and warm-up

- In this lesson you are going to learn about **company culture** in **Ireland**.



Lots of global companies are doing business in Ireland.



# Ireland

What do you already know about Ireland?





## Guess whether the answers to these questions are true or false

	TRUE	FALSE
1. Ireland has a population of around 8 million people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Ireland experienced huge economic growth throughout the twentieth century.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Ireland was hit hard by the 2008 financial crisis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Most companies based in Ireland were started by Irish entrepreneurs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The Irish economy has the highest growth rate of all EU countries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. You should not make small talk about religion in Ireland.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## True or false?

You will find out the answers to the questions on the previous page during the lesson.



## Ireland fact file

Read through the information about Ireland below.

Ireland is a nation of around 5 million people situated off the west coast of Great Britain. It is often nicknamed the **Emerald Isle** due to its green countryside, a product of the abundant rainfall the island experiences. The two **official languages** of Ireland are Irish and English. Estimates of how many people speak Irish vary widely from about 10% of the population to around 30%; English remains the dominant language both at home and in business.







## Ireland fact file

Ireland was a relatively poor country until the end of the twentieth century, and saw mass emigration of its citizens throughout its history. However, from the mid-1990s onwards Ireland experienced a massive **economic boom** which made it one of the richest countries in Europe; this period of growth led to Ireland being nicknamed the **Celtic Tiger**, a name which put the country on a par with the huge growth seen in the Asian tiger economies of Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan.

The Irish boom was based around a **knowledge economy** with some of the most important industries being software, financial services and pharmaceuticals. Until 2009, Ireland had the second highest **GDP per capita** in Europe and experienced high levels of **skilled immigration**. Many of these immigrants came from Eastern European countries which joined the European Union in 2004, such as Poland and Lithuania. One quarter of all births in Ireland in 2009 were to foreign mothers. Ireland was also one of the eleven nations who first adopted the Euro as the official **currency** and is still a member of the **Eurozone** today.



## Do you know what these phrases from the text mean?

Emerald Isle

official language

economic boom

Celtic Tiger

knowledge  
economy

GDP per capita

skilled immigration

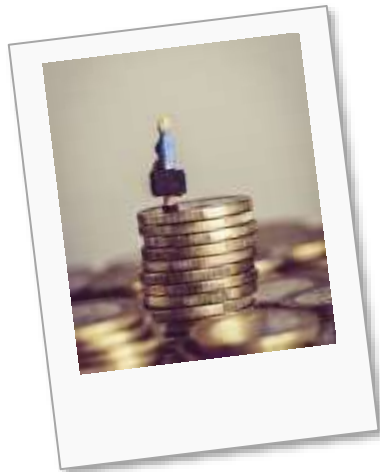
currency

Eurozone



## Ireland

**Do you think Ireland's  
EU membership  
propelled its economic  
boom?**



**Which other countries do  
you know of that are  
attracting skilled  
migrants at the moment?**



## Ireland fact file

**Read the rest of the fact file about Ireland.**

Ireland suffered badly in the 2008 **financial crisis** and was the first country in the European Union to officially enter **recession**. During the economic crisis, the Irish government **loosened** tax laws in order to attract foreign investment, which led to Ireland being seen as a **tax haven**. At present, the European Union is looking to **curb** these laws and the United States, whose companies have benefited the most, has already begun to close the **loopholes** which allowed taxes to be paid in Ireland. Large companies with bases in Ireland include Microsoft, Google and Apple.

Since 2014, the term **Celtic Phoenix** has been coined in response to Ireland's rise from the economic crisis. Currently, it has a **growth rate** of almost 8%, which is by far the highest in Europe. Employment is growing quickly, as is **retail spending**. However, there are worries that the previously mentioned curbs on Irish tax laws could change that.





## Vocabulary

**Discuss what the words and phrases from the text mean with your teacher or classmates.**



financial crisis

recession

to loosen

tax haven

to curb

loophole

Celtic Phoenix

growth rate

retail spending



## Tax havens

Do you know of any **countries** aside from Ireland which are considered to be **tax havens**?

What **companies** do you know of that use tax havens?





## Ireland's future

Which of these sentences do you think is most likely to be true given what you just read in the text? Explain your answer.

“

Ireland is sure to keep rising economically for the foreseeable future.

”

“

Ireland is definitely heading for disaster again, just like in 2009.

”





## Get ready to listen



Get ready to listen to your teacher talking about  
**company culture** in **Ireland**.





## Company culture in Ireland

**While you are listening, think about what these words and phrases mean. Afterwards, discuss the meanings with your teacher.**

chitchat

bear in mind

proportion

congenial  
circumstances



## Irish English

- As the text mentioned, **English** is spoken in **Ireland**. However, it does **differ** somewhat from British English or other types of English that you might be used to hearing.
- Below are some of the main differences.

- Irish people can **speak** very **quickly** – but they won't mind if you ask them to slow down or repeat themselves.
- The **pronunciation** differs from British or American English in some ways.
- There are some **slang** words unique to Ireland.
- **Grammar** and **sentence structure** is different to Standard English.
- **Spelling** follows **British English** rather than American English rules.



## Pronunciation in Irish English

- Certain **letters** or combinations of letters are **pronounced differently** in Ireland to what you might be used to.
- Of course, you should **not** try to **imitate** the Irish accent, but the examples below should help you to understand it.

British English pronunciation	Irish English pronunciation
TH: thin, thick, think	T: tin, tick, tink
TH: the, they, though	D: de, dey, dough
I: tight, night	OI: toight, noight
I: time, mine	A: tame, mane



## Slang in Ireland

- **Slang** is used in **business situations** in **Ireland** just as it might be in other English-speaking countries.
- Below are some examples of common Irish slang words or phrases.

slang	→	standard English
grand	→	good/well
What's the craic?	→	What's happening?
give out	→	complain
gas	→	fun/funny
your man	→	that man



## Slang



Everything's **grand**, thanks.

Don't **give out** about the boss while Tom's here, they're good friends.



That was **gas**! What a great end to the project.

What's **your man** over there doing?





## Grammatical differences

- **Grammatical differences** between standard English and the English spoken in Ireland are often due to the influence of the **Irish language**.
- You have two examples of this below.

### the present perfect tense

- Rather than using the construction ***have just + past participle*** to refer to something that just happened, the Irish often use ***am/are/is + after + -ing***.
- E.g. *I have just e-mailed my boss* becomes ***I'm after e-mailing my boss.***

### yes and no

- The Irish language does not have words for **yes** or **no**. This has had an influence on Irish English.
- Irish people often answer questions in English **using the verb**.
- E.g. Can you read this report for me? **I can.**



## How are you?



***How are you?*** is a common greeting in Ireland. It is not an invitation to actually tell someone how you are, so you can either reply with ***good, how are you?, good, and yourself?*** or simply ***grand.***



How are you? Grand.



## How might people answer these questions in Ireland?

1. Is the meeting starting soon?

→ It is.

2. Have you e-mailed the schedule to Mark?



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3. Can you read this proposal please?



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4. Will the boss be in today?



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5. Do you know the head of the department?



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## Answer these questions

Is it polite to **give out** about your co-workers while in the office?

How would you reply to the question **how are you?**

Do you think it's appropriate to have a **gas** in the office in Ireland?

What are you **after doing?**



## Ireland



Now go back to the **true or false quiz** on p. 6 and discuss the answers with your teacher or classmates.



## Writing

**Write a guide with three bullet points summing up the most important things to bear in mind when doing business in Ireland.**

A blank, lined notepad with a spiral binding on the left side, intended for writing the guide.





## Doing business in Ireland

**Would you feel confident doing  
business in Ireland?  
Is it similar to in your country?**





## Reflect on the goals

Go back to the second slide of the lesson and check if you have achieved all the goals of the lesson.

yes

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no

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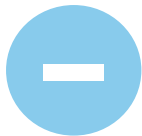
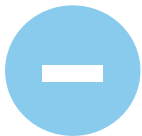
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## Reflect on this lesson

Think about everything you have seen in this lesson.  
What were the most difficult activities or words? The easiest?



If you have time, go over  
the most difficult slides again



## Answer key

### Exercise p. 24

2. I have, 3. I can, 4. He will, 5. I do.

### Exercise p. 6

1. false – the population is around 5 million
2. false – Ireland was relatively poor until the end of the twentieth century
3. true
4. false – Ireland attracted foreign investment by loosening their tax laws
5. true
6. true

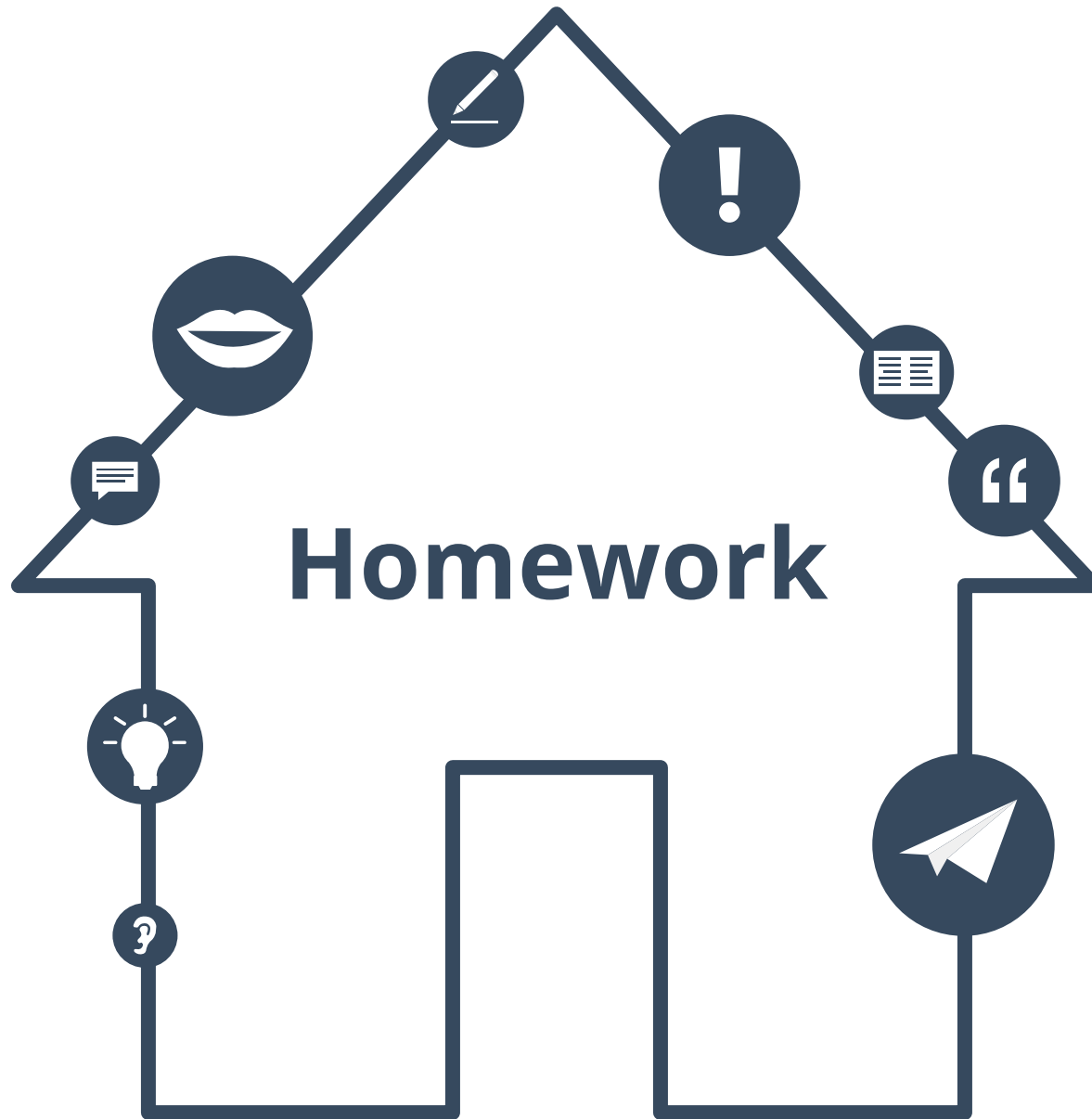


## Transcription

### Exercise p. 17

Doing business in Ireland is not that different to doing business in any other country in Western Europe or North America. Small talk is important in Ireland in a business environment and you should expect all meetings to begin with some **chitchat**. The Irish are usually difficult to offend but there are some rules that you should **bear in mind**. In particular, it is best not to mention Irish stereotypes such as hard drinking, or make jokes about the Irish Potato Famine. Another important topic to avoid in Ireland is religion. A large **proportion** of the population is Catholic, although the importance of Catholicism in Irish society is slowly weakening. However, due to the very recent history of violence between the Republic of Ireland's Catholics and the Protestants of Northern Ireland, religion is not a topic to bring up even in the most **congenial circumstances**.







## Unscramble these tips about company culture in Ireland

A

with your

small talk

Always make

Irish colleagues.

B

during small  
talk.

Don't mention

religion or

Irish  
stereotypes

C

Irish people  
speak

ask them to

slow down.

fairly quickly so

D

grammar to

Standard  
English.

use a different

Irish people  
might



## About your country

**Write a bullet point guide (about 5 or 6 points) for visitors from Ireland coming to do business in your country.**

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## Homework answer key

### Exercise p. 34

- A. Always make small talk with your Irish colleagues.
- B. Don't mention religion or Irish stereotypes during small talk.
- C. Irish people speak fairly quickly so ask them to slow down.
- D. Irish people might use a different grammar to standard English.



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