

Army Specials at

road block

KEY STAGE 3: FROM ULSTER TO NORTHERN IRELAND, 1600-1925 UNIT 5: 1920-1921

UNIT DESCRIPTION

The activities in this unit aim to help pupils learn about and evaluate the importance of this crucial historical period, showing the realities of the challenges facing the authorities in Ulster, and then Northern Ireland:

- 'Unholy war' in Belfast 1920-1921
- The Anglo-Irish Treaty and the Boundary Commission

This unit introduces pupils to how the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 and the creation of the new state of Northern Ireland in June 1921 took place against the background of severe problems in the area, particularly violence.

This violence, often sectarian, pre-dated the establishment of Sir James Craig's government and grew in intensity afterwards. Some of it was related to the War of Independence, which saw guerrilla conflict between the IRA and British Crown forces throughout Ireland.

Pupils will discuss and evaluate the origins and events of what became known as the 'unholy war' in Belfast, and similar events which took place elsewhere in the north in 1920 and 1921. There will be a particular focus on the response of the authorities before and after formal partition in June 1921.

Finally, pupils will assess the significance of the truce of July 1921 in the War of Independence, and the implications of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December, particularly the Boundary Commission, which was to re-examine the existing borders of Northern Ireland.

UNIT INTENTIONS

Pupils will:

- 1. Discuss the events of the period from January 1920 to December 1921 in Belfast and the rest of Ulster, focusing on how the authorities handled them.
- 2. Explain how the truce, the Treaty and the Boundary Commission presented further challenges to Sir James Craig's government.
- 3. Demonstrate an understanding of the changes which took place during the period from January 1920 to December 1921 through the use of digital media.

UNIT OUTCOMES

Pupils will:

- Be able to discuss how historical developments from January 1920 to December 1921 posed significant challenges to the authorities in Ulster. and then Northern Ireland.
- Employ ICT skills to express an understanding of the topic.

HANDOUTS AND GUIDES

Key Information

- 'Events in Belfast 1920-1921' PowerPoint
- Task Sheet

SOFTWARE

Audio Editing Software, such as Audacity

• Comic Template PPT

HARDWARE

- Whiteboard
- PCs/Laptops





ACTIVITY

Starter

Play Resource 1: The Agony of Belfast

Watch this silent clip, called The Agony of Belfast, for vivid pictures of the poverty and trouble in Belfast in the summer of 1920. Ask the pupils, can you tell whether the areas shown are Protestant/Unionist or Catholic/Nationalist?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

This vivid newsreel clip from 1920 introduces pupils to some of the realities of life in Belfast in 1920.

Using the Key Information, teachers will have a choice of activities to engage pupils.

Teachers may choose to split the class into groups and ask pupils to use the discussion points to discuss some aspects of the Key Information. Pupils will then share their discussions with the rest of the class.

Alternatively, teachers may want to use the Questions/Tasks as group discussion questions or to test individual knowledge.

The Alternative Task allows pupils to work in groups to research and discuss the question 'The Belfast IRA was more successful than the B Specials in achieving its aims in Belfast and elsewhere in 1920 and 1921.' Explain whether you agree or disagree with this statement, and why.

If possible, allow pupils to research the topic on the internet – see Suggested Additional Resources, 'Events in Belfast in 1922' PowerPoint or search online.

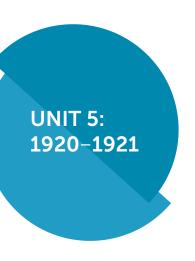
Plenary – discuss with pupils how the events of the period January 1920-December 1921 in the north of Ireland created challenges for the people and governments. The Key Information is designed to cover the information within the topic and meet the learning objectives.

The discussion questions on the Key Information are designed to meet the learning objectives through interaction and Q & A.

The questions on the task sheet are designed to meet the learning objectives through the pupils' understanding and application of the information.

The various activities should allow the pupils to learn while they interact. The activities will also serve to reinforce knowledge and encourage discussion.

The plenary discussion will focus on how developments in the period January 1920-December 1921 are relevant in a study of the realities of life in Ulster and Northern Ireland during the period of partition.



Key Information

A. 'Unholy war' in Belfast 1920-1921

In many respects, partition was a reality for people in the six northeastern counties before the official opening of the Parliament of Northern Ireland on 22 June 1921:

'Long before the election for the new Parliament in May 1921 the unionists had begun to gain power in Northern Ireland.'
(Michael Laffan, Historian)

As the Government of Ireland Bill passed through its parliamentary stages during 1920, the centuries-old divisions in what was soon to become Northern Ireland became even more evident than before. Also during 1920, violent incidents of the War of Independence, or the Anglo-Irish War, were multiplying in Leinster, Munster and Connacht.

Until June 1921, Ulster, along with everywhere else in Ireland, was governed from Dublin Castle: the centre of British administration in the country. The British government in London had overall control; however, government officials, the Irish Civil Service, the Royal Irish Constabulary (police service) and the court system were all based in Dublin. The Government of Ireland Act and then the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921 changed almost everything.

In September 1920 the British government appointed Sir Ernest Clark to set up the government, parliamentary and legal systems in Northern Ireland. These were to be ready for when Sir James Craig and his Northern Ireland government officially took over governing the six counties during the next year. Craig and Clark worked closely together in making these preparations.

Massive political change for Ulster, along with violence in many other parts of Ireland, was not a recipe for a peaceful six counties. Dealing with violence was perhaps the most difficult problem facing any government in Ulster during 1920 and 1921. The historian Alan F. Parkinson has used the term 'unholy war' to describe the sectarian killings and troubles, mainly in Belfast, in the two years from June 1920 until June 1922, and Dr Robert Lynch has also provided detailed evidence on these. About 550 people were killed in Ulster 1920-1922, with 100 of these deaths occurring outside Belfast. Belfast was clearly at the centre of the bloodshed.



UNIT 5: 1920-1921

Belfast numbers:

JUNE 1920 – JULY 1922: AT LEAST **452 PEOPLE KILLED**

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JUNE 1920 TO DEC 1920 JAN 1921 TO DEC 1921

70 KILLED

100 KILLED

JAN 1922 TO
JULY 1922
ALMOST
300 KILLED
(80 IN MAY ALONE)

OF THE **452 PEOPLE KILLED:**



80% KILLED WERE CIVILIANS

(NOT MEMBERS OF THE POLICE, OR ARMY, OR PARAMILITARIES)

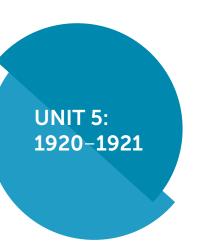




60% ROMAN
CATHOLICS
40%
PROTESTANTS

(267 CATHOLICS, 185 PROTESTANTS)





Belfast numbers (continued):



10,000 CATHOLICS FLED FROM BELFAST

OF WHOM 9000 SOON RETURNED

8000 PEOPLE FORCED OUT OF THEIR HOMES BY INTIMIDATION

(80% WERE CATHOLICS, 20% PROTESTANT; THE PERCENTAGE OF PROTESTANTS IN BORDER AREAS WAS GREATER)







75% OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE KILLED DIED WITHIN A FEW DAYS OF A MAJOR IRA ATTACK

[IN BELFAST OR ELSEWHERE IN ULSTER]

6000 PEOPLE
VIOLENTLY
EXPELLED FROM
THEIR WORKPLACES



Some other relevant numbers:

UNIT 5: 1920-1921





POPULATION OF BELFAST: 25% ROMAN CATHOLICS 75% PROTESTANTS



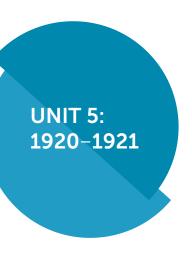
POPULATION OF THE NEW STATE OF NORTHERN IRELAND (SIX COUNTIES) 34% ROMAN CATHOLICS 66% PROTESTANTS



POPULATION OF IRISH FREE STATE 93% ROMAN CATHOLICS 7% PROTESTANTS



POPULATION OF IRELAND (32 COUNTIES) 75% ROMAN CATHOLICS 25% PROTESTANTS



These disturbing numbers do not tell the whole story of how ordinary people in Belfast experienced the early 1920s, the period which saw the creation of Northern Ireland a century ago. For example, most of the killings in Belfast took place in localised areas, rather than throughout the entire city. For many people in Belfast and elsewhere in Ulster, the violence was not a major factor in their lives; however, there were numerous serious incidents in shared areas such as the city centre, and curfews and street searches affected nearly everyone.

First, we will examine the efforts of the British government to deal with these events, while working with the Ulster unionists in 1920 and early 1921. We will then explore the law and order policies of Sir James Craig's government from June 1921. Craig's government did not gain full authority over law and order until November 1921, and some confusion was to remain over which government was in control of this vital area.

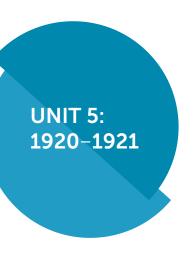
In these years after the Great War, the UK was experiencing severe economic difficulties. These were at their worst in the six counties of what was to become Northern Ireland. Linen, shipbuilding and engineering, the biggest industries in Ulster, were in decline. By October 1921, there were 78,000 people unemployed, and poverty became more widespread as a result. Violence was not the only problem to be dealt with, by the people or by the government.

To learn more, view the 'Events in Belfast 1920-1921' PowerPoint. This PowerPoint, along with the Key Information here, will help you to answer the questions and complete the activities and tasks later. It contains lots of evidence about the violence in the streets of the city and elsewhere during 1920 and 1921. This violence caused the deaths of many children. It is hard to read about these deaths but important to remember that many innocent people have died in wars and conflicts, including on our own streets. There is no better reason to try to stop further war and conflict from happening.

B. The Anglo-Irish Treaty and the Boundary Commission

The truce in the War of Independence, signed on 11 July, led to long and difficult political negotiations between Sinn Féin representatives and British ministers in London from early October until 6 December 1921. Éamon de Valera, the leader of Sinn Féin, did not attend the talks in London, leaving **Arthur Griffith** and Michael Collins to lead the Irish team. Prime Minister Lloyd George and **Winston Churchill** led the British one.

The Irish demand was for a unified independent Irish republic. The British, fearful of the break-up of their Empire, offered more self-government for Ireland than had been on the table at any time before, but not a republic. The issue of Ulster and partition did not feature much in the talks. Sinn Féin wanted the British to hand over Northern Ireland, of course, but this was unacceptable to the British, and Craig made his feelings known to Lloyd George frequently.



The most that Lloyd George was prepared to offer Sinn Féin was a Boundary Commission.

The Boundary Commission

This was to look at the borders of Northern Ireland and determine which parts should be changed. It was to be set up once Sinn Féin had signed the Treaty. In order to get them to sign, and to accept less than an independent Irish republic, Lloyd George led Griffith and Collins to believe that large parts of Northern Ireland, including Derry/Londonderry and parts of counties Tyrone, Fermanagh, Down and Armagh would be transferred by the Commission to the new southern government.

The Treaty was signed in the early hours of 6 December 1921. 'It accepted that all of Ireland would leave the UK and become known as the Irish Free State but that the Parliament of Northern Ireland could request that the powers of the Irish Parliament should not be extended to the six counties of Ulster.' (David Torrance). This legal opting-out took place in December 1922.

However, Craig, Carson and other unionists were very unhappy with the Boundary Commission, which they saw as a potential threat to the existence of the new northern state. They believed that the British government had betrayed them. Speaking in the House of Commons debates on the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921, when the Boundary Commission seemed to threaten that Derry/Londonderry would be handed over to Collins and Griffith, Ulster unionist MP for Ormeau in Belfast, Thomas Moles, emphasised the significance of the city for Protestants:

'The city of Derry is historic ground. It contains memories that no Ulsterman ought ever to forget. The very dust of its churchyard heaves with the immortal dead. The apprentice boys who made a stand are buried there. There too are the walls behind which a starving population fought disease and the enemy, and held high the lamp of freedom. There is no Ulsterman who would surrender a yard of those walls.'

It was clear that the Treaty was unlikely to make Ireland, north or south, more peaceful than before.



Peace for Ireland (Evening Standard)



Perspectives

The new state of Northern Ireland faced a ruthless challenge from the IRA and, in addition, Craig found himself struggling to keep Loyalist extremism under control.

Dr Russell Rees

It was the failure of the Sinn Féin leadership in Dublin to develop a practical northern policy which left the Ulster nationalists, now separated from those in the twenty-six counties, so divided and illequipped to meet the reality of partition.

Dr Eamon Phoenix

This Boundary Commission will give us most of Tyrone and Fermanagh and part of Armagh and Down.

Arthur Griffith to Éamon de Valera, November 1921

The Treaty of December 1921 was only made possible by the introduction of partition for Northern Ireland in June. This removed the problem of Ulster from the negotiations with Sinn Féin, temporarily at least.

Professor D. G. Bovce

A Treaty could now be made with nationalist Ireland, as unionist Ulster had been separately catered for.

Professor Roy Foster

When the Irish republicans in Dublin were suddenly forced to confront the Ulster Question which they had avoided for so long, it was too late for them to prevent the establishment of a unionist state in the six counties.

Professor Michael Laffan

Men may die to keep the Crown and Empire. I do not know who will die to keep Tyrone and Fermanagh.

David Lloyd George, Prime Minister, December 1921

Questions

1.
Give at least two
reasons why you
think over 80% of
the killings in Ulster
1920-1922
happened
in Belfast.

Explain how
Protestants/Unionists had
managed to keep a majority
in Derry/Londonderry Council
for 240 years, despite being
a minority in the city
compared to Catholics/
Nationalists.

Explain why Catholic workers and some Protestants were violently thrown out of the Belfast shipyards and other factories in 1920.

3.
Explain why
Dr Adrian Grant felt
that 'bloodshed was
almost bound to
happen' in Derry
in 1920.



Extension Activity

- Get into groups of three or four.
 Using the Key Information, the
 Additional Resources and any other
 evidence you can find, write a script for a brief drama about the Belfast shipyard expulsions in July 1920:
 - John is a Catholic who had worked in one of the yards for 20 years; his father has also worked there.
 - **Thomas** is a Protestant trade union organiser, known by loyalists/ unionists as a 'rotten Prod'.
 - **Peter** is a loyalist shipyard worker who was a member of the UVF in 1913-14; he has fought in the Great War in the 36th Ulster Division.
- Describe what happened to these men on the day of the expulsions.
 Think carefully about what has made them who they are, and behave in the way they did.
- Prepare to perform or simply read your drama in class.

Task

Use the Key Information, including the final section on the Treaty and Boundary Commission, with the speech by Thomas Moles MP.

• Imagine you are a unionist living in Belfast in December 1921. Write a letter to your brother or sister who is living and working in Derry/Londonderry. Explain to them why you think he/she should move back to Belfast as soon as possible. Provide as much evidence as you can to try to persuade them.

Or

• Imagine that you are the brother or sister living in Derry/Londonderry replying to your Belfast relative, explaining why you think it is more important for you to stay where you are. You think that they should move to Derry/Londonderry too, and explain why. You might refer to the history of the city and mention the Apprentice Boys: remember the evidence in Unit 1?





Alternative Task

• Get into groups. Use the evidence in this Unit, your own research and information in the Additional Resources to answer the question:

'The Belfast IRA was more successful than the B Specials in achieving its aims in Belfast and elsewhere in 1920 and 1921'. Explain whether you agree or disagree with this statement, and why.

Write your answers on the Task Sheet, which should be printed.

- In your groups, gather the evidence to answer the following questions, and decide on what success criteria you will use:
 - Decide what you think the IRA's aims were in Belfast, and other places in the north. Do you think they succeeded? If so, why?
 - Decide what you think the aims of the B Specials were – what did the government expect of them? Did you think they succeeded? If so, why?
 - Now ask each other, which group was most successful? Why do you think that?
- Once your group has done the research, you all must agree on an answer. One pupil from each group can then share the conclusions you have reached together with the class.
- Next, each group should consider how the events of the period January 1920-December 1921 created serious challenges for the British government, and then the government of Sir James Craig. Could there have been a better way of resolving things?

The following additional resources may be useful for this research task.

Suggested Additional Resources

Resource 1: Resource 1: The Agony of Belfast

Resource 2: Interview with Dr Adrian Grant (UU) on Derry/Londonderry in 1920

Resource 3: Article by Dr Marie Coleman (QUB) on Belfast in 1920

Resource 4: <u>BBC NI Year '21 Episode 2: The Midwife (Sir Ernest Clark)</u>

Resource 5: <u>BBC NI Year '21 Episode 5: The Witness</u>

Resource 6: <u>BBC NI Year '21 Episode 9: The Doctor and the Lion King</u>

(This clip includes two stories: a Belfast Catholic doctor who smuggled guns for the IRA and a Protestant/Loyalist member of the Specials who later kept a lion as a pet).

Resource 7: <u>BBC NI Year '21 Episode 10: The Big Fellow (Michael Collins)</u>

Resource 8: <u>BBC NI Year '21 Episode 11: The Barracks Boys</u>

(The Ulster Special Constabulary, RIC and RUC)

Resource 9: Bloody Sunday (Wikipedia entry)

Resource 10: Chronology of events by month

Digital Task 1 Audio Editing Task



TASK DESCRIPTION

Imagine that the year is 1971, the 50th anniversary of the creation of Northern Ireland.

- In this task, you will work in threes to script, record and edit a radio interview with two men from Belfast who were born in 1900.
 - **William** is a Protestant man who joined the B Specials when they formed in 1920 and remained a member for many years.
 - **Peter** is a Catholic man whose brother Malachy Halfpenny was one of the three young men taken from his home and murdered in Belfast on 11 June 1921, eleven days before the Northern Ireland Parliament was opened by King George V. Peter had joined the Belfast IRA in November 1920.
- The interviewer: Ask each man several questions about his memories and feelings about that time. Do Peter and William have anything to say to the other after 50 years of living in Northern Ireland? What would they like to say to each other about that time?
- Research the topic together using the Key Information, Additional Resources, news reports, videos, eyewitness accounts, and so on.
- Write and record the script based on the information you have researched for a radio interview between the interviewer and the two men. Your recording will be at least **three minutes** long.

PLAN

Teacher: Give the pupils search terms to source appropriate information from the internet. Ask them to consider the reliability and objectivity of the information that they have found.

- Using the information you have sourced from the internet, create a radio interview.
- Identify and select sources/text to use and save them appropriately in a dedicated folder with a meaningful filename.
- Keep an account of the sites you have visited in a saved document.

DO

Teacher: Encourage pupils to consider the feelings of the interviewee involved. Ask them to consider how valid their information in the broadcast is.

Remind pupils that, although they can experiment with the effects of Audacity, they should also consider whether these effects are necessary or appropriate.

Also, remind pupils to save their work in a dedicated folder with an appropriate filename.

- Working in pairs, use the record function on the audio editing software (such as Audacity) to record your script and use the various editing tools to edit your recording (for example, Selection tool, Time Shift tool, Trim, or Silence). When you have edited the recording, complete the audio file by exporting it in a file format (WAV/MP3).
- Save your work in a dedicated folder with an appropriate filename.

REVIEW

Teacher: Give pupils the opportunity to view one another's work. You can do this by displaying the best work on the whiteboard, or pupils may circulate the room. Taking other pupils' feedback into account, ask them to justify their choices and decisions, including any difficulties they encountered when creating their audio file. Pupils may complete this in the form of a saved document.

• Review each other's work. Discuss the choices you have made, and why.

Digital Task 2 Comic Creation Task



TASK DESCRIPTION

Create a comic book version of the reasons why Ulster unionists were so worried about the Boundary Commission in December 1921. Include as much evidence as possible from this unit and previous units, including Unit 1 on the Plantation, 1641 rebellion and Siege of Derry; Unit 2 on the Home Rule Crisis 1910-1914, and Unit 3 on the Easter Rising and Somme.

- Use an app such as Comic Life, Book Creator or Adobe Spark (if available.)
- Alternatively, you can use the Comic Template PowerPoint.

Create a two-page comic layout.

- If you are using the PowerPoint template, this will be over two slides.
- Your layout should include at least eight images/panels and caption boxes/speech bubbles.
- Your captions and speech bubbles should include evidence directly from events in the previous units.
- Research images and information from the internet to use in the comic.

PLAN

Teacher: Give the pupils search terms to source appropriate information from the internet. Ask them to consider the reliability and objectivity of the information that they have found.

- Design a storyboard using the images and information you have sourced from the internet.
- Identify and select images/text to use, and save them appropriately in a dedicated folder with a meaningful filename.
- Keep an account of the sites you have visited in a saved document.
- Use the images and information you have sourced to design your comic on a storyboard.

DO

Teacher: Remind pupils to save their work in a dedicated folder with an appropriate filename.

- Use images and speech bubbles/caption boxes to detail information from previous units. You should use at least **three** images you have sourced. Complete your piece of work by exporting it in a suitable file format (such as JPEG).
- Consider:
 - the size and style of fonts;
 - the size and cropping of images;
 - the colours used; and
 - the tools available to you within the software package.
- Save your work in a dedicated folder with an appropriate filename.

REVIEW

Teacher: Give pupils the opportunity to view one another's work. You can do this by displaying the best work on the whiteboard, or pupils may circulate the room. Taking other pupils' feedback into account, ask them to justify their choices and decisions, including any difficulties they encountered when creating their comic. Pupils may complete this in the form of a saved document.

• Review each other's work. Discuss the choices you have made, and why.



Task Sheet

'The Belfast IRA was more successful than the B Specials in achieving its aims in Belfast and elsewhere in 1920 and 1921.' Explain whether you agree or disagree with this statement, and why.
Success criteria – how do we judge which group was most successful?
What do you think the IRA's aims were in Belfast and other places in the north? Did they succeed? If so, why?
What do you think the B Specials' aims were – what did the government expect them to do? Did they succeed? If so, why?
Finally, each group should consider how the events of the period January 1920-December 1921 created serious challenges for the British government and then the government of Sir James Craig. Could there have been a better way of resolving things?



Copyright

Page 1:

Army Specials at road block Credit: Belfast Telegraph

Page 8:

Peace for Ireland (Evening Standard)

Credit: John Frost Newspapers/Alamy Stock Photo