



Edition 13, January 2015



(S) operation TRANSFORMATION

Operation Transformation, the RTE health and fitness programme is back on TV for its 7th year. Each year a team of advisors encourage the 5 leaders to eat a healthy diet and take regular exercise in order to lose weight and become fit and healthy.

On the web site, viewers can follow the diet and exercise plan of the leader that they feel most matches their own weight. Walks and runs are organised around the country to help the nation get fit and active.

In the past 10 years, we as a nation, have developed bad eating habits. We eat bigger portions, a lot more fast food and take much less exercise. The World Health Organisation has warned that unless we change our ways Ireland is set to become the fattest country in Europe!

Stephanie Roche

Women's international soccer player Stephanie Roche, the 25 year old from Shankill in Dublin hit the headlines when a goal she scored in a club match was nominated for the world's best goal of the year.

The match itself was watched by less than 100 people but was filmed on a phone and put up on YouTube where it was watched by six million viewers.

Stephanie was up against the top international players in the world. Although her goal received over 1.3 million votes she came in 2nd place. She is the first woman ever to be ranked as one of the top 3 goal scorers in the world.

Stephanie Roche



Pic courtesy the journal.ie

Charlie Hebdo

Earlier this month, the world was shocked when gunmen entered the Paris office of the Magazine "Charlie Hebdo" and shot 12 of its workers. Several more shootings took place over the next few days which saw 5 more people killed including 3 police.

A group of Islam followers admitted the shooting. Last year the magazine published cartoons which they claimed had made fun of their religion.

600.000 copies of the magazine are normally sold each week but the first one published since the shooting sold over 5 million copies as people showed their support for the magazine and its workers.

Leo Varadkar

Dublin TD and Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar recently announced that he is gay. He is the first member of government to discuss his sexuality.

Exercises

Some of the bigger words in the stories have been broken down into syllables or parts

word	breakdown	No.of
		parts
operation	op er a tion	4
transformation	trans form a tion	4
encourage	en cour age	3
exercise	ex er cise	3
portions	por tions	2
developed	de vel oped	3
organisation	or gan is a tion	5
international	in ter na tion al	5
nominated	nom in at ed	4
admitted	ad mitt ed	3
published	pub lished	2
violence	vi ol ence	3





Edition 14, February 2015

What is it about Father Ted?



Picture courtesy of journal.ie

It's 20 years since the TV series "Father Ted" first hit our screens and yet it's as **popular** as ever! **Regular** repeats of the series means the characters, Ted, Dougal, Father Jack and the everpopular Mrs. Doyle, are as well known today as they were in 1995. It's hard to believe that there were only 25 **episodes** made in total.

The comedy series followed the everyday events in the lives of 3 priests and their housekeeper living in a rundown house on an island, known as "Craggy Island". Although all the studio scenes were filmed in England, most of the outdoor scenes were filmed in North Clare and on the Aran Islands. The house is still a very popular tourist attraction with visitors to Co. Clare.

At the time some of the story lines and the language used, especially by the colourful Father Jack, offended some people. However some of the funny lines and events from the programme have become part of our everyday language, with strange events often being referred to as a "Father Ted moment"!

Many of today's well-known actors and comedians started their career with small parts on Father Ted. Graham Norton, for example, first came to fame as the entertaining Father Furlong.

In 1998, just weeks after filming the 3rd and last series, the main actor Dermot Morgan died suddenly from a heart attack. He was only 45.

Every **February**, Father Ted fans can visit the Aran Islands for "Ted Fest", or go to Kilfenora in Clare each May for the "Father Ted Festival". Highlights include a "Ted Tour" of some of the **locations** seen in the series, as well as tea and cake in his house!

1. Exercises

Some of the bigger words in the story have been broken down into syllables or parts.

Word	Breakdown	No. of Parts
popular	pop u lar	3
regular	reg u lar	3
episodes	ep is odes	3
attraction	at trac tion	3
language	lang uage	2
especially	es pe cial ly	4
offended	off end ed	3
comedians	com ed i ans	4
entertaining	en ter tain ing	4
February	Feb ru ary	3
locations	lo ca tions	3

2. Many words end with ic

Examples: traffic panic mechanic public picnic clinic fantastic garlic music attic

	in the blanks usir The	ng the above words will fix my car.
b)	The	lights turned red.
c)	We went on a _	to the park.
d)	She started to _	when she got lost.
e)	The doctor work	s at the
f)	We store our old	books in the

3.	we put a	prefix such	rite the opp as <u>dis</u> <u>un</u> <u>n</u> orrect prefix	<u>nis</u> before
_	_obey	lead	aware	able
_	_happy	read	agree	behave
_	_like	lucky	print	true
		4	ave a ct o	al

undertood	expected
healthy	unbelievable

took





Edition 15. March 2015

Katie Taylor



Pic courtesy katietaylor.ie

Katie Taylor, the 28 year old from Bray in Co. Wicklow, is the current Irish, European, world and Olympic champion boxer. Just recently she won her 5th world title in a row and her 17th gold medal. This makes her the most successful female boxer in history.

Boxing since she was 12, she had to wait 3 years before the Irish Boxing Association allowed women the right to box in **competition**. In 2001 she made history when she won the first ever women's boxing bout held in Ireland.

Katie's father, Pete, is her manager and trainer and most loyal supporter. He himself is a former boxer and recognised early on that his young daughter not only had a great talent but was fiercely determined to one day win an Olympic gold medal for Ireland.

Before choosing boxing as her career, Katie took part in athletics, played camogie and football for her local GAA club and played international soccer for Ireland. She is a deeply religious person and speaks openly about her faith. Before and after every fight she prays and gives thanks to God.

Even after all her success, Katie is still as determined and focused as she was in the early days. Publicly she is quietly spoken and shy and has her feet firmly on the ground.

She has spoken about the **importance** of sport in her own life and feels all children should be encouraged to take part. She believes sport encourages a healthy lifestyle and builds the confidence you need to be the best you can be. Katie is a true role model for young people in Ireland today.

Exercises

Some of the bigger words in the story have been broken down into parts/syllables.

Word	breakdown	No.of parts
European	Eur o pean	3
champion	cham pi on	3
successful	suc cess ful	3
association	ass o ci a tion	5
competition	com pet i tion	4
manager	man a ger	3
supporter	sup port er	3
determined	de ter mined	3
international	in ter na tion al	5
religious	re li gious	3
focused	fo cused	2
importance	im port ance	3
confidence	con fid ence	3

2.	See how many small words you can make
	using the letters in the word "international"
	Examples: at, tin, ran

3.	Find a word fr	om the stor	y that has the
	same meaning	g as these:	
•	holy	r	li

great skill

___e_t

winner

ch _ _ p _ _ _

wants to win

__ term _ _ _ _

many countries

in _ _ _ na _ _ _ _ l

belief in yourself

a fan

sup _ _ _ _

Distance Learning Service

The Distance Learner



Edition 16, April 2015



The 60th **Eurovision** Song **Contest** takes place this year on May 23rd in Vienna, Austria. Forty countries are taking part this year with Australia taking part for the first time.

Ireland holds the record for the most wins, having won the contest 7 times. Dana was our first winner in 1970. Johnny Logan won it in 1980 and again in 1987 and is the only singer to have won twice. He also wrote the winning song in 1992, "Why Me", sung by Linda Martin.

However, in recent years we have had little luck. Our last win was in 1996 and in both 2007 and 2013 we came last. It didn't help that on one occasion we sent Dustin the Turkey to represent us!

Over the years many famous singers and bands began their career on the Eurovision. The most famous was the Swedish band, ABBA, who won in 1974 with the song "Waterloo".

Some believe that the standard of the songs and the performers has gone down over the years. However, the Eurovision is still one of the most watched shows on TV with almost 200 million viewers tuning in each year.

Ireland will be represented this year by 17 year old Tipperary school girl, Molly Sterling, singing "Playing with Numbers". She is the youngest singer ever to represent us. Her song, which she co-wrote, is said to be one of the best Irish entries in many years.

We wish Molly the very best of luck!



Pic: courtesy Independent.ie

Referendum 2015

On May 22nd people will be asked to vote in 2 referendums. The first, known as the Marriage Equality Bill, seeks to change Article 41 of the **Constitution** to allow marriage between two people regardless of their sex.

The second **referendum** seeks to change Article 12 of the Constitution to allow the age that a person can run for **President** of Ireland, to be changed from 35 down to 21.

A country's constitution is a list of written rules setting out how a country is run, **protecting** the rights of its people. There can be no change made to it unless the people vote to do so.

Exercises

1. Some of the bigger words in the story have been broken down into syllables or parts.

Word	Breakdown	No. of parts
Eurovision	Eur o vi sion	4
contest	con test	2
occasion	oc ca sion	3
represent	re pres ent	3
constitution	con sti tu tion	4
referendum	ref er end um	4
President	Pres id ent	3
protecting	pro tect ing	3

When you are learning to spell a new word:

- Look at the word and break it into parts.
- Say each part slowly a few times.
- Cover the word.
- Write down each part as you say it.
- Check to see if you have the correct spelling.
- 2. Find words from the texts that have the same meaning as these:

•	Competition
•	Well-known
•	Written rules of a country
•	State your opinion on paper
•	Head of State
•	Audience





Edition 17, June 2015

Deaths of well-known broadcasters

May saw the sudden passing of two well-known

Irish broadcasters.

Bill O Herlihy, aged 76, had retired just last summer having spent 49 years as a **presenter** on RTE. Most of these years he spent as a soccer and sports presenter. Along with John Giles, Eamon Dunphy and Liam Brady he covered ten soccer World Cups. He also covered ten Olympic Games.

He had a great love and **knowledge** of sport mixed in with a sense of fun. His ability to ask tricky questions often had his three guests in a heated debate which made the programme even more **entertaining.**

Derek Davis, aged 67, was a newsreader and broadcaster on RTE radio and TV for many years. He was best known on the afternoon show "Live at 3" which he co presented for 15 years. He also presented the "Rose of Tralee". His easy going style and sense of humour made people feel at ease. He was well **respected** by his fellow workers, friends and viewers and regarded as a true gentleman. May they both rest in peace.



香人

Pic courtesy RTE.IE

Ireland says "yes"

1.2 million Irish people voted in favour of the referendum to allow marriage between 2 people regardless of their sex. We are the first country in the world to decide this by a vote from the people. There was a large turnout of voters and the final result was 62% in favour and 38% against.

However, the referendum to lower the age a person can run for president from 35 to 21, was defeated with 73% voting no and 27% voting yes.

The Royal Visit

Britain's Prince Charles and his wife Camilla have recently completed a 4 day official visit to Ireland.

Among the places they visited were the Burren in County Clare and the **University** of Galway. They also visited Mullaghmore harbour in County Sligo where, in 1979, his grand uncle, Lord Mountbatten and 3 others were killed in an IRA bombing. Here they met with local people who **remembered** that day and a service of peace was held in a church nearby.

In his speech, the prince spoke about the **difficult** past between Ireland and Britain and the need to move on from this. Earlier, Prince Charles shook hands with Sinn Fein leader, Gerry Adams. He is the first member of the British royal family to do so and this is seen as another step in improving **relations** between the two countries.



Pic courtesy Irishtimes.com

Breakdown of words.

Some of the bigger words in the story have been broken down into syllables or parts.

Word	Breakdown	No. of syllables
broadcasters	broad cast ers	3
presenter	pre sent er	3
knowledge	know ledge	2
entertaining	en ter tain ing	4
respected	res pect ed	3
official	off i cial	3
university	u ni ver si ty	5
remembered	re mem bered	3
difficult	diff i cult	3
relations	re la tions	3





Edition 18, July 2015

Eircode

Over the next few weeks every address in Ireland will be given a new postcode. This will be known as Eircode. This code will then be added to the last line of your current address.

The code will be 7 characters long and will be a mix of letters and numbers. There will be 2 parts to it.



The first 3 characters will show what part of the country you live in.

The final 4 characters will be completely different for each and every house, flat or business.

Having your own code means that it will be easier to find your address, especially in rural areas where houses do not have numbers. This means emergency services such as an ambulance or fire service will now be able to locate an address more easily, saving valuable time.

In the coming weeks every household and business will receive a letter informing them of their new Eircode.

Tragedy in America

On 16th June, 6 young Irish students lost their lives and 7 were seriously injured when an apartment balcony collapsed in the city of Berkeley in California. All the students were at a 21st birthday party in a 4th floor apartment. They were standing out on the balcony when it suddenly crashed to the ground.

All of them, except for one, had arrived in America on student visas to work for the summer months. Every year as many as 8,000 Irish students travel to America on the J1 visa, enjoying an experience of a lifetime.

As news of this tragedy reached Ireland, parents and friends spent anxious hours trying to find out if their child was one of the dead or injured. It was indeed every parent's worst nightmare. 5 of the victims were from Dublin and one girl was American, of Irish parents.

The memories of these young and beautiful people will forever be in the hearts of their families and friends. May they rest in peace.





Edition 19, September 2015

Anniversary of the Atomic Bomb

Seventy years ago, this year, the most powerful bombs ever made were dropped on 2 cities in Japan.

On August 6, 1945, an American fighter plane flew over the Japanese city of Hiroshima (Hir o shi ma) and dropped the first ever atomic bomb. This bomb had been given the code name "Little Boy". Within minutes the city was destroyed, and up to 70,000 people were killed instantly.

Three days later the second bomb, code named "Fat Man", was dropped on the city of Nagasaki (Nag a sak i). Once again it wiped out everything over a 5 mile area and killed **thousands**.

It was said that the burning heat from the force of the **explosions** was many times greater than the heat from the sun. **Radiation** from the explosions caused people to become **seriously** ill.

It will never be known exactly how many people died as a result, but it is believed to be as many as 200,000. Several thousands died from burns, cancer and other illnesses caused by the bombs. Many who **survived** were left with terrible injuries. Thousands of bodies were never found.

The Japanese army **surrendered**, ending World War 2, which had lasted for more than 5 years. The American **government** have always said that by forcing Japan to surrender and ending the war, that up to 500,000 lives were saved.

The use of the atomic bomb and its **terrible** effects on human life will forever be questioned. It has never been used again.

Smoke clouds over the 2 cities after the bombings.



Pic: courtesy wikicommons

Breakdown of words

Some of the bigger words in the story have been broken down into syllables or parts

Word	Breakdown	No. of syllables
anniversary	ann iv er sar y	5
American	A mer i can	4
Japanese	Jap an ese	3
thousands	thous ands	2
explosions	ex plo sions	3
radiation	ra di a tion	4
seriously	ser i ous ly	4
survived	sur vived	2
surrendered	surr en dered	3
government	gov ern ment	3
terrible	terr ib le	3

When you have read the story, answer these questions.

- 1. Which country dropped the atomic bombs?
- 2. On which cities did they drop them?
- 3. What were the code names given to the bombs?
- 4. How many years is it since the bombings?
- 5. What happened after Japan surrendered?
- 6. Has the atomic bomb ever been used since?

Match words of the same meaning (The first one is done for you)

Explosion \	To give up
Wipe out \	Stayed alive
Survived	The date it happened
	Wipe out

Surrender The results
 Anniversary Destroy
 Effects Blast

Write down the opposite of each of these words

a)	Under	
b)	Below	
c)	Narrow	
d)	Deep	
e)	Light	
f)	Difficult	
g)	Fresh	
h)	Empty	





Edition 20, October 2015

The Ploughing Championships

Over 250,000 people attended the 3 day National Ploughing Championships, which were held this year in Ratheniska, Co. Laois. It is now the biggest farming event in Europe. Although the ploughing competitions are at the heart of the festival, it offers much more and it's not just for farmers.

There are thousands of stands selling every type of farm machine, tractor and Jeep. You can see prizewinning cows, bulls, sheep and pigs. All the major food producers and supermarkets give away free goodies. There are fashion shows, cookery classes and live music. You can meet famous sports people, politicians and TV stars. In fact, there's something for everyone. For many farmers it's the event they look forward to after a busy summer, before the long winter sets in!

End of the sporting year

The first Sunday in September saw Kilkenny once again lift the Liam McCarthy Cup. In a fast, tough game, they beat Galway to win their 36th All-Ireland Hurling title. Their manager, Brian Cody, is now the most successful manager ever, having led his county to ten All-Ireland victories. Galway won the minor title, beating Tipperary.

In the football championship, Dublin won the Sam Maguire Cup for the 25th time. They beat last year's winners, Kerry, in a game played in very wet conditions. Thousands of supporters filled O'Connell Street the following night to celebrate their win. Kerry didn't go home empty-handed, however, as they won the minor title.

Some of the Dublin team visiting Crumlin Children's hospital



Picture courtesy of RTE.ie

Refugee crisis

As thousands of people flee from Syria and other Middle Eastern countries, Europe is being asked to open its borders to provide them with shelter.

Civil war in Syria has caused more than 4 million people to leave their homes as they fear for their lives. They travel across the sea to Greece and Turkey in overcrowded fishing boats, risking their lives. This year more than 3,000 people, many of them young children, have drowned.

European leaders have still not agreed on how to cope with the huge number of refugees seeking shelter. At the moment there are 1.5 million refugees living in camps along the European border. With nothing but the clothes on their backs, hungry and homeless, they depend on aid organisations for food and clothes.

Ireland has said that it will take up to 5,000 refugees in the next few years.

Exercises

- **1.** When you have read the stories, answer these questions:
- a. In what county were the ploughing championships held?
- b. What is the name given to the All-Ireland football cup?
- c. How many times have Dublin won the All-Ireland?
- d. How many All-Irelands have Kilkenny won?
- e. What is the name of the Kilkenny hurling manager?
- f. How many refugees does Ireland plan to take?
- **2**. Find words in the stories above that have the same meaning as these:

Boss	. ma g - r

•	Someone under 18	. m - n - r

Run away . f - ee

Protection from danger . <u>sh - - ter</u>

Line dividing countries . bo - d - r

• A very difficult time . cr - - is

A competition . ch - - pi - - sh - -

• A person who is forced r - f 00

A person who is forced r-f-ee

to flee their country





Edition 21, November 2015

Death of Hollywood Actress

The famous Irish actress and Hollywood star, Maureen O'Hara, passed away recently at the age of 95.

Born in Ranelagh in Dublin in 1920, her real name was Maureen Fitzsimons. She was the second eldest of 6 children. From a young age she loved acting and singing, and attended acting classes in the Abbey theatre. At only 17 years of age, she was discovered by the well-known Hollywood actor Charles Laughton, who later starred with her in several films. With her red hair, Maureen was regarded as a great beauty. She went on to become one of the most famous film stars of her time.

During her career she made more than 60 films. Her most famous film was 'The Quiet Man', which was filmed in the west of Ireland in 1952. She starred alongside the very popular John Wayne, who remained her lifelong friend and with whom she made many films.

Maureen was married 3 times. Her last marriage was to an American pilot, Charlie Blair, who flew the first American passenger plane into Shannon airport in 1945. He sadly died when his plane crashed in 1978.

Maureen loved Ireland and remained proud to be Irish throughout her life. Her family asked that she be remembered as a woman of courage who was not afraid to stand up for herself and who worked hard to make her dreams come true. When asked how people might honour Maureen, they said, "we have a simple request: visit Ireland one day and think of her."



Maureen O'Hara in 1942 (picture courtesy of Wikicommons)

1916 Centenary

2016 will mark 100 years since the 1916 Easter Rising, when a group of Irish men and women, led by Pádraig Pearse, held an armed revolt against British rule in Ireland. In honour of those who died for Ireland, the government are planning many special events to mark the anniversary.

As part of this, every primary school in the country will be visited by members of the Irish army. All 3,305 schools will be presented with an Irish flag (tricolour) and a copy of the proclamation. This is a document written by 7 of those who died in the rising, declaring Ireland to be an independent country. A member of the army will read out the proclamation and explain to the children that they should show respect for the flag at all times. The children will be encouraged to ask questions about the rising and about army life today.

Every school will then be asked to write their own proclamation, stating their hopes and dreams for Ireland in the future.

Rounding

Since 28th October, most Irish shops and businesses have been 'rounding off' bills to the nearest 5 cent. The reason for this is to reduce the number of 1 and 2 cent coins in use. This is because it costs more to make these coins than the coins are actually worth! So, if the total bill you are paying ends in:

- 1 or 2 cent, this will be rounded down to 0 cent.
- 3 or 4 cent, this will be rounded up to 5 cent.
- 6 or 7 cent, this will be rounded down to 5 cent.
- 8 or 9 cent, this will be rounded up to 10 cent.

Examples:

21 or 22 cent will be rounded down to 20 cent. 43 or 44 cent will be rounded up to 45 cent. 86 or 87 cent will be rounded down to 85 cent. 78 or 79 cent will be rounded up to 80 cent.

Rounding will only be used when you are paying in cash. However, customers still have the right to ask for their exact change. Charities and voluntary organisations have asked people to donate their 1 cent and 2 cent coins to good causes.







Edition 22, December 2015

Joanne O'Riordan

Joanne O'Riordan, a 19-year-old student from Millstreet in County Cork, has received an International 'Outstanding Young Person of the Year' award at a ceremony held in Japan last month.

Joanne was given this award for speaking out about the rights of people with a disability to lead a normal life. Joanne herself was born with a condition known as 'Total Amelia', which means that she was born without arms or legs. She is one of only 7 people in the world living with this condition.



Joanne

Picture courtesy of rte.ie

In 2011, when she was only 15, Joanne met with Taoiseach Enda Kenny and challenged him about his government's decision to cut disability payments. The government later changed their minds when the Taoiseach was reminded that he had in fact promised Joanne not to cut payments!

Her family have always been hugely determined that Joanne should be given the same opportunities in life as any other girl of her age. Last year, her brother Stephen made a TV film about Joanne's life called 'No Limbs, No Limits'. In it we see the many challenges that Joanne faces daily, but also how determined she is to achieve her goals in life despite her disability.

Joanne, who completed her Leaving Certificate in 2014, is now a student at University College Cork, where she is studying criminology. Technology plays a big part in helping her to live an independent life. She can work her computer, iPad and other gadgets by using her lips, nose and chin. She also has an electronic wheelchair which means she can move around without assistance.

No stranger to speech making, Joanne has spoken in front of the United Nations on the benefits of technology. She is a bright, entertaining young woman who is not shy about sharing her opinions. She has received many awards, both in Ireland and abroad.

At the awards ceremony in Japan, Joanne told the 600 people in the audience that life is what you make it, that we all meet obstacles in our lives, but we need to overcome them. She said, "Each and every day I live by the motto of what I fail at today I will overcome and conquer tomorrow."

Joanne is, without a doubt, an inspiration to us all.

50 Ways to Kill Your Mammy!

This is the title of the TV series written and produced by Dublin man Baz Ashmawy, which recently won an Emmy Award in New York. The Emmy is an award given to the best and most popular TV programmes shown in the USA.

The TV series follows Baz and his 71 year old mother Nancy as they travel all over the world. Baz then challenges his mother to take part in some daring adventures, from skydiving to flying a plane, and from snake charming to gambling in a casino in Las Vegas!

Nancy is the star of the show as she sets aside her fears and performs each task with some very funny results. A typical Irish mammy, Nancy is not afraid to speak her mind and often reminds Baz to "mind his language"! The close relationship between Baz and Nancy has won the hearts of viewers and made the programme popular in many countries.



Picture courtesy of irishexaminer.com







December 2015

Dear Reader,

We hope that you enjoy reading our monthly worksheet, The Distance Learner. Thank you to everyone who has sent us nice comments and ideas.

We would like to invite you all to enter our Christmas competition. The closing date is **Friday 22 January 2016**.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas, and may 2016 be a good year for you all.

Kind regards,

The NALA Distance Learning Team.



Competition

If you would like to be in with a chance to win a €25 book voucher, please answer this question:

What is the first name of the 71 year old mammy who is the star of the TV series '50 Ways to Kill Your Mammy'?

Please send your answer and your name by text to 087 198 4228

OI

by email to dls@nala.ie

Closing date is Friday 22 January 2016.

All correct answers will be entered into the draw.

Best of Luck!