

That's Interesting!



A worksheet for adults to practise reading, writing, spelling and numbers

Michael Collins



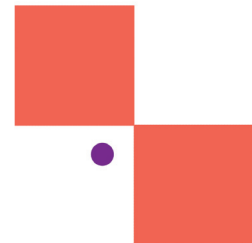
This year marks the 100th anniversary of the death of Michael Collins, a leader, a soldier and a politician who played a major role in Ireland's fight for independence from England. Michael Collins was born in 1890 in the small townland of Woodfield near Clonakilty in Co Cork. He was the youngest of eight children. His father, who was 74 when Michael was born, died when Michael was just six years old.

He was a bright student and after school he sat an exam for the civil service after which he moved to London to take up a job as a post office clerk in the British Post Office. While in London he joined an organisation known as the IRB, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through this he became interested in the fight for Irish independence. He returned to Ireland in 1916 where he took part in the 1916 Easter Rising alongside Padraig Pearse and many others when they took over the GPO in Dublin. He was sent to prison for his part in the rising but he was released after eight months. With many of the leaders now shot or in prison, Collins took over the role as leader and officer in command of the Irish Volunteers. He organised the prison escape of Eamon De Valera and others from a prison in Wales.



Michael Collins

Image source: Unknown author, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



In 1918, a political party, “Sinn Fein”, which in the Irish for “We ourselves”, was set up by Arthur Griffith. Collins became a member. In the general election, later that year, they organised candidates around the country to run in the general election. Seventy three members of Sinn Fein were elected including Michael Collins himself, who was elected in Cork, and Eamon De Valera who was elected in Clare. The British Government expected that these new politicians would travel to Westminster in London and become part of the British government who still ruled Ireland. However, the Sinn Fein members refused and declared themselves the Irish Free State.



First first Dáil 1919

Image source: Public Domain via Wikimedia Commons

On 21 January 1919, they set up a government in Dublin which they named “Dáil Éireann”, which means “gathering of Ireland”. The British government were furious and refused to recognise the new Irish government. Michael Collins was a member of the new Irish government but he also became the commander of the Irish Republican Army, (IRA).

On the day that the first Dail began in Dublin, a group of Irish volunteers in Tipperary set up an ambush and attacked and killed two police men. Many more similar attacks around the country followed and this is said to have been the start of the Irish war of Independence which was to last for two more years.

As leader of the Irish army, Collins knew that they could not match the power of the British Army’s powerful weapons and large numbers. Instead he organised small groups of armed men to travel around the country by night attacking English soldiers and officials. He had spies and informers in the British army and in the British government who passed on information to him. He was causing so much trouble that the British offered a ten thousand pounds reward for information that might lead to his arrest. His face was not as well known as some of the others so he was able to walk the streets of Dublin freely without being arrested. Frustrated by the events, the British government called a truce. It was decided that a group of Irish politicians would travel to London to meet with the British government to try and work out a peace deal. Michael Collins was among the Irish group that went.

After many months of talks and with no sign of a deal, the British threatened to send more soldiers to Ireland to begin the fighting once again. Collins and the others knew that if this happened, Ireland did not have enough guns or soldiers to fight them and so they agreed to a deal.

The Anglo-Irish treaty was signed on 6 December 1921. It recognised Ireland as a free state but which would be still ruled by the King of England. The six counties of Northern Ireland were to remain part of Britain. Although Michael Collins and the others were not happy with the deal, they felt it was a step on the road to independence. On their return to Ireland, they were met with a lot of anger. Although they had little choice but to sign the treaty, many believed that they should not have signed.

Within weeks, fighting broke out and a civil war started between those who were pro treaty and those who were anti treaty. It was a bitter war that saw many friends and families divided and fighting on opposite sides. Sadly, on August 22 1922, Michael Collins was shot dead by a group of anti-treaty soldiers in Cork. He was just 31 years of age. At the time of his death he was engaged to be married to the beautiful Kitty Kiernan from Longford.



Kitty Kiernan

Image source: Unknown author, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



The grave of Michael Collins in Glasnevin.

Image source: J. Crocker, Attribution, via Wikimedia Commons

It is said that his funeral was one of the biggest ever to be seen in Ireland. More than 500,000 people lined the streets of Dublin to pay their respects to this brave man. Michael Collins, who had fought so bravely for Ireland, died before Ireland became a free country. He is buried in Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin where many thousands of people come to visit his grave every year.



The letters **ough** can give us different sounds

**Sounds like
ff**

cough

rough

tough

enough

**Sounds like ow
(as in low)**

dough

though / although

through

thorough

**Sounds like
awt**

bought

brought

fought

nought

thought

sought

drought

wrought

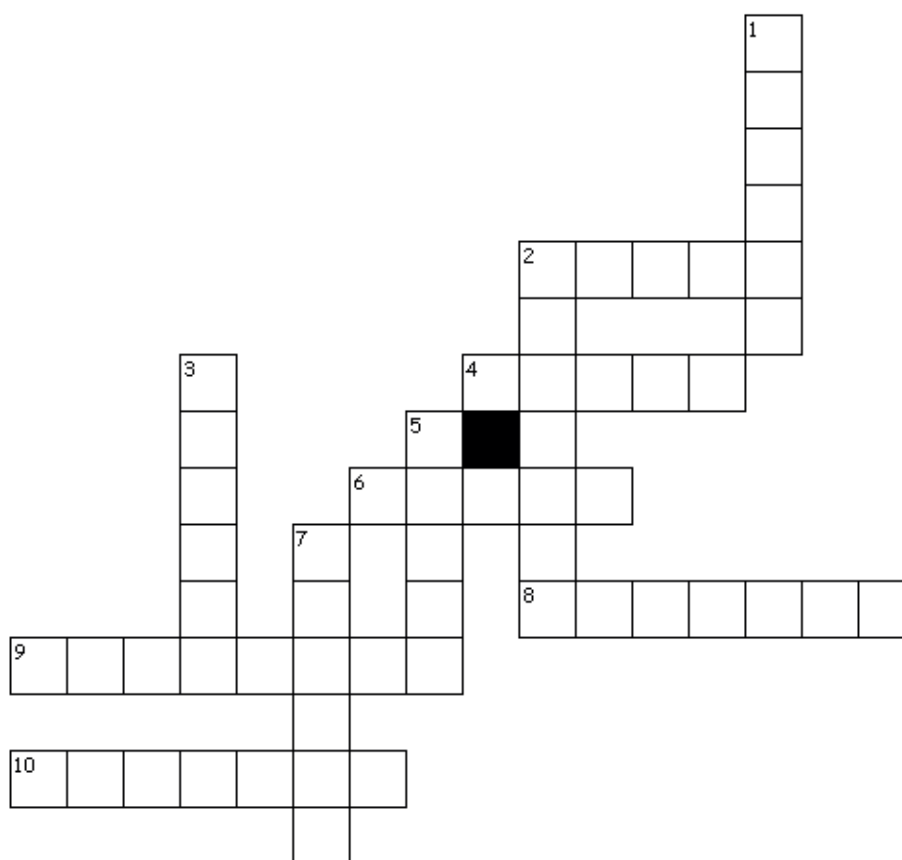
Fill in the blanks with words from the lists above:

1. I had a bad _____ and a sore throat.
2. The opposite to smooth is _____.
3. I went for a walk _____ the woods.
4. When there is no rain for a long time, we could have a _____.
5. Another word for zero is _____.
6. I _____ a new pair of shoes.
7. _____ I had enough money, I still did not buy it.
8. Do you want more or have you _____?
9. The soldier _____ in World War 1.
10. The gate is made of _____ iron.
11. An idea in your head is a _____.
12. He gave the house a _____ cleaning.
13. The baker has to mix the _____ to make bread.
14. Something that is very hard is very _____.

Crossword



The answers are all words from the word list on page 3



Across

2. The lockdown was very _____ for some people (5)
4. The baker makes bread from _____ (5)
6. The sea was very _____ and I was seasick (5)
8. I looked in _____ the window and I saw you inside (7)
9. _____ it was a nice day I still did not go for a walk (8)
10. I _____ my own water with me to the gym (7)

Down

1. Katie _____ a good fight (6)
2. An idea in your head (7)
3. Did you have _____ to eat?(6)
5. Please _____ into a tissue (5)
7. I _____ it in Penney's (6)

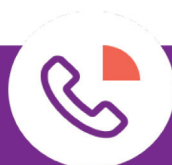
Notes



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Further help is available

If you need help with these worksheets, or with reading, writing, maths or digital skills, you can contact NALA.



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or text **LEARN** to **50050**

You can study online on our Learn with NALA website www.learnwithnala.ie or with a tutor over the phone or we can give details of your local centre.

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