

That's Interesting!



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

Michael D. Higgins to end his term as President



In November, Michael D. Higgins will step down as President of Ireland, a position he has held since 2011, having served two 7-year terms. His retirement marks a long career in politics. He served as a county councillor, as mayor of Galway, as a senator, a TD (Teachta Dála - a Member of the Irish Parliament), and as a government minister.

Michael Daniel Higgins, better known to everyone as just Michael D., was born in Limerick in 1941. His father became unwell and was unable to work, so his family struggled to make ends meet. At five years of age, Michael and his younger brother were sent to live with their aunt and uncle in County Clare where they were raised until they left school.

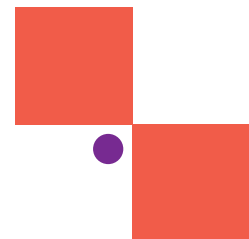


President Michael D. Higgins

Image source:
NALA

After his Leaving Certificate, Michael D. began working as a factory worker and later as an office clerk. After a few years, with the help of a loan from a family friend, he returned to learning as an adult and began studying in the University of Galway. He continued his study in colleges in Manchester and America. He was the first member of his family to go to university. After several years abroad he returned to Galway University where he became a lecturer in politics.

While living in Galway, he became interested in local politics and soon joined the Labour Party. He ran for the local elections and served as a county councillor for Galway, and as mayor of Galway on two occasions. In 1981, he was elected as a TD for Galway West. He lost his seat in 1982 but was re-elected in 1987 and held this seat until 2011.



In 1993, he was made government minister in the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht and was involved in the setting up of TG4, the Irish language television station.

Michael D. is married to Sabina Coyne, who is from County Galway. They met in 1969 and got married on 8 July 1974 in Dublin. In 2024, they celebrated 50 years of marriage. They have four adult children.

Both Michael D. and Sabina love animals and have had Bernese Mountain Dogs. Their most recent dogs were Bród (which is the Irish word for pride) who passed away in 2023 and Misneach, (which is Irish for courage). Their dogs have won the hearts of the Irish people, and they could often be seen in public with the President.



Sabina Higgins

Image source:
Irish Defence Forces
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Throughout his life, Michael D. has stood up for human rights, equality and against racism. He has highlighted the importance of a right to housing and education for everyone. We are very grateful to President Higgins for being a patron of the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) during his time as president and supporting our work in adult learning and education. He has also spoken about Ireland's history and its fight for independence and peace in the past. He has spoken about war torn countries in the world where their people have been forced to leave to start new lives in new countries.

He is a proud Irish man who is passionate about Irish music, culture and all sport. He is a fluent speaker of Irish and Spanish. He has written many books on Irish history and politics as well as books on poetry. He has been a well-liked and popular president which was seen when he won the highest number of votes ever received by a candidate in a presidential election. We wish President Higgins and his wife Sabina, a happy retirement.

The election for a new Irish President will take place on Friday 24 October. To be allowed to vote, your name must be on the register of electors. You can check this at your nearest county council office or online at www.checktheregister.ie

Words ending in ough / ought



The letters ough / ought can be said in many different ways. Say these words out loud to hear the different sounds.

ough

Sounds like ff	Sounds like ow (as in low)
cough	dough
rough	though / although
tough	through
enough	thorough

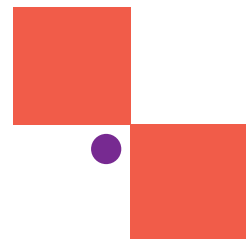
ought

Sounds like awt	
bought	thought
brought	sought
fought	drought
nought	wrought

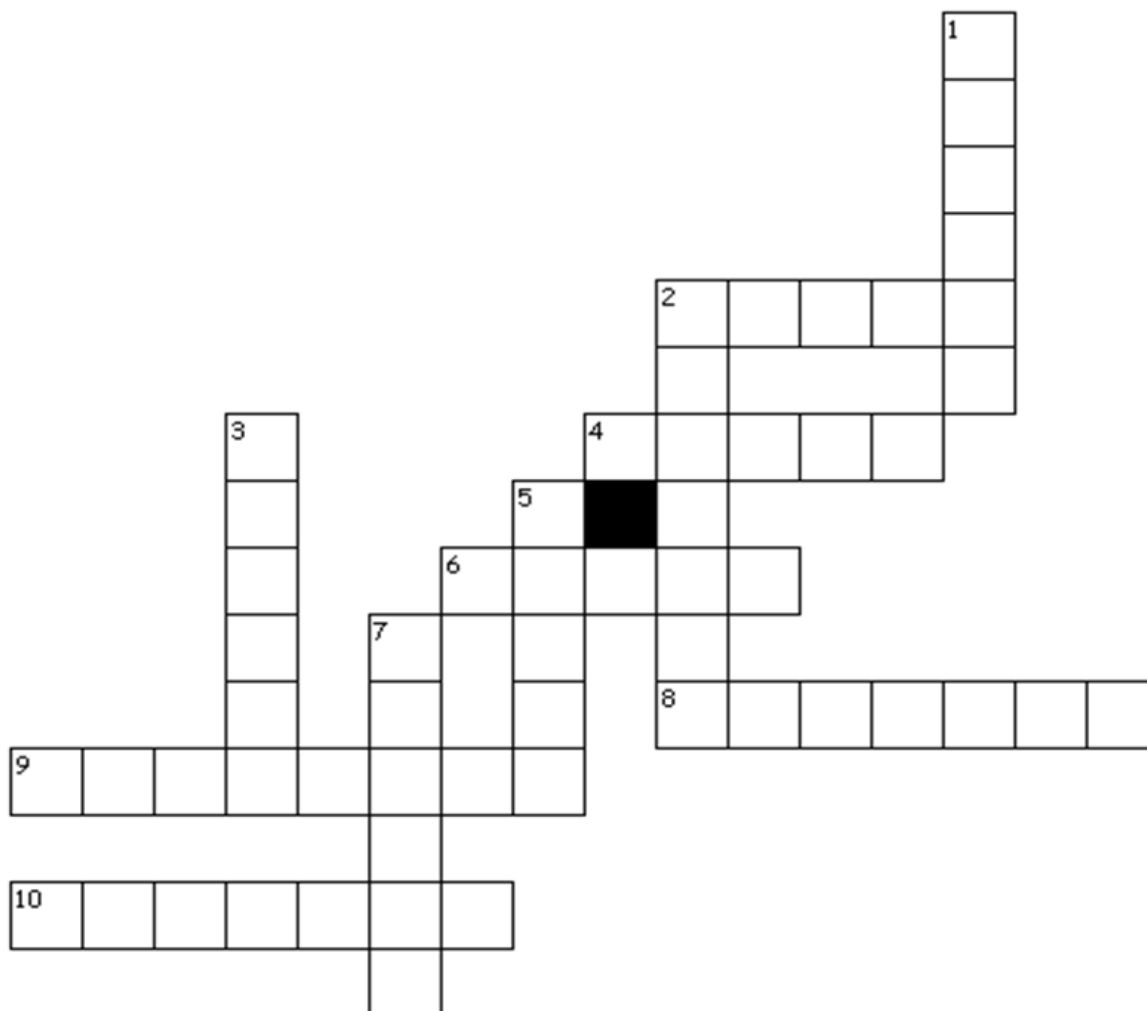
Fill in the blanks with words from the lists above.

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 I.
10. An idea in your head is a _____.
11. He gave the house a _____ cleaning.
12. The baker has to mix the _____ to make bread.

Crossword



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



Across

2. Climbing that mountain was really _____. (5)
4. The baker makes bread from _____. (5)
6. The sea was very _____ and I was seasick. (5)
8. I looked _____ the window and saw you. (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. The boxer _____ 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 Penneys. (6)



Fractions

To work out the fraction of a number you must divide by the bottom number (denominator) and then multiply your answer by the top number (numerator).

Example: What is $\frac{3}{4}$ of 72?

- Divide 72 by the bottom number, which is 4, $72 \div 4 = 18$
 - Multiply your answer by the top number, which is 3, $18 \times 3 = 54$
- Answer $\frac{3}{4}$ of 72 is 54

1. In a class of 1,260 pupils, $\frac{1}{4}$ are left-handed, $\frac{2}{6}$ wear glasses.

a. How many pupils are left-handed? _____

b. How many pupils wear glasses? _____

2. Tom won € 50,000 in the Lotto. He decided he will divide it between his 2 children. He will give the eldest $\frac{3}{5}$ and the other child will get $\frac{2}{5}$.

How much will each get? Eldest _____ Other child _____

3. My weekly wage is €500. I spend $\frac{2}{10}$ on food, $\frac{2}{5}$ on rent, $\frac{1}{4}$ on savings and spend the rest.

How much do I spend on:

a. food _____

b. rent _____

c. savings _____

d. spending _____

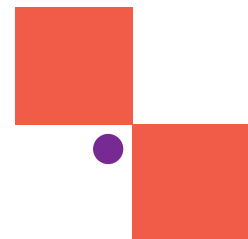
4. There is a Black Friday Sale on in the local shop. There will be $\frac{1}{10}$ off the price of all goods. I see a jacket I like, the price tag is €69.99.

How much will I pay for the jacket if I get $\frac{1}{10}$ off the price? _____

Answers

- Q1. a. 315 b. 420, Q2. Eldest €30,000 Other child €20,000,
Q3. a. €100 b. €200 c. €125 d. €75, Q4. €63

Notes



Further help is available

If you need help with these worksheets, or with reading, writing, maths or digital skills, you can contact the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA).



Call us on Freephone **1 800 20 20 65**

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 training options.



National Adult Literacy Agency

Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

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That's Interesting! are not
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