# The Easter Rising, 1916

## A. The Plan

1. **Who planned the Easter Rising?**

2. **Who carried out the Easter Rising?**

3. **Who formed and led the Military Council set up to plan the Easter Rising?**

4. Name the four members of the Military Council who were linked to both the IRB and the Irish Volunteers.

5. **What did Eoin MacNeill want to avoid?**

6. **What did the Irish Volunteers want by 1916 and how were they going to achieve it?**

7. **Why did the rebels link with Connolly’s Irish Citizen Army?**

8. **How did the rebellion try to disguise its preparations?**

9. **What was MacNeill’s reaction to the planned rebellion and what actions did he take?**

10. **Where were the rebels supposed to get their guns from (place and person)?**
B. The Events

Monday 24th April

Tuesday 25th

Wednesday 26th
What was the impact of the Easter Rising?

Source 1 - From the Belfast correspondent, The Times, 1st May.

At 4 o’clock yesterday afternoon the Irish rebellion - an episode in Irish history which all practical and sensible people in this country regard as the most inglorious and disgraceful outbreak of organised rowdyism which ever sullied the annals of this country - came to a sudden end.


The great bulk of the population were not favourable to the insurrection, and the insurgent themselves, who had confidently calculated on a rising of the people in their support, were absolutely disappointed. They got no popular support whatever. What is happening is that thousands of people in Dublin, who ten days ago were bitterly opposed to the whole of the Sinn Fein movement and to the rebellion, are now becoming infuriated against the government on account of these executions, and, as I am informed by letters received this morning, that feeling is spreading throughout the country in a most dangerous degree...

Source 3 - A wall mural commemorating the Easter Rising in the Ardoyne area of Belfast, Northern Ireland.

Source 4 - C.S. Andrews, who witnessed the Rising and its Aftermath.

The executions, which followed the defeat of the Volunteers, horrified the nation...The first open manifestation of the deep public feeling aroused by the executions was at the Month’s Mind for the dead leaders. A Month’s Mind is the Mass celebrated for the soul of a relative or friend a month after his death. It was the first opportunity that sympathisers of the rebels had to come out in the open. I went with my father to the first Month’s Minds, which was for the brothers Pearse...I was surprised to see so many well-dressed and obviously well-to-do people present...For us young people these Masses were occasions for quite spontaneous demonstrations, shouting insults at the Dublin Metropolitan Police who were always around but, having learned their lesson during the 1913 strike, were anxious to avoid trouble...
C. The Impact
i. The Immediate Impact

ii. The long-term impact.

**The Easter Rising was an absolute failure and served more to damage Irish Nationalism than to promote it!**

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The rising of 1916 left the Irish Volunteers in disarray. However, the organisation was quickly re-established on a wave of popular support, due to the events surrounding the rising and a fear of conscription. The new leadership did not envisage starting another uprising for the time being. At their first post-rising convention in October 1917 it was determined that the Volunteers were primarily to be used to exert political pressure on the British government to recognise the Irish Republic. For this aim the Volunteers were to arm, train and organise. However, the public drilling exercises which started at the end of 1917, particularly in the southwest, brought them into conflict with the authorities. The increasingly harsh measures taken by the government during 1918 drove the organisation underground. The concurrent success of the politicians in Sinn Fein made the militarists in the Volunteers feel left out, and, without the sanction of their leadership, they began to take increasingly violent action which slowly led to the start of the Anglo-Irish War.

After the foundation of Dail Eireann in January 1919 the organisation became increasingly known as the Irish Republican Army, but also retained the name Irish Volunteers. This highlighted the ambivalent relationship between individual Volunteer units and their military and political leadership. Although now officially the army of the Republic, Volunteers never fully accepted the central power of their GHQ established only in March 1918, or the political control of the Dail government, despite swearing an oath of allegiance to it.

The IRA were unevenly distributed over the country. They attracted the largest membership in the west, closely followed by Munster. Membership was limited in the more prosperous east, and extremely low in Ulster, where the Volunteers were a largely marginal organisation concentrated in a few small areas. Membership was young, aged mainly between 20 and 30, and overwhelmingly Catholic. Volunteers were broadly representative of Irish Catholic male society coming from most sectors of the working and middle classes, although rarely from the upper middle or upper classes, and few were unemployed or indigent. Officers tended to be older, more urban based, and of a higher status—better educated, more skilled, and financially better off. In Dublin the majority of officers and men had working-class backgrounds. There are clear changes in the composition of membership after the fighting started. The average age of Volunteers decreased, and in the most active areas the rank and file became more working class and urban, while officers became more middle class. The difference in backgrounds which had existed between areas in the early period largely disappeared in 1920-1.
1. Use a dictionary and your own brains to work out what the underlined words and phrases mean:
   a. **conscription** -
   b. **political pressure** -
   c. **drove the organisation underground** -
   d. **GHQ** -

2. Use the information to complete the map below showing the spread of IRA membership.

3. Why do you think the membership of the IRA was much larger in the west than in the east and Ulster?

4. What problems do you think the independence of the IRA from its leadership might cause in the future of Ireland?