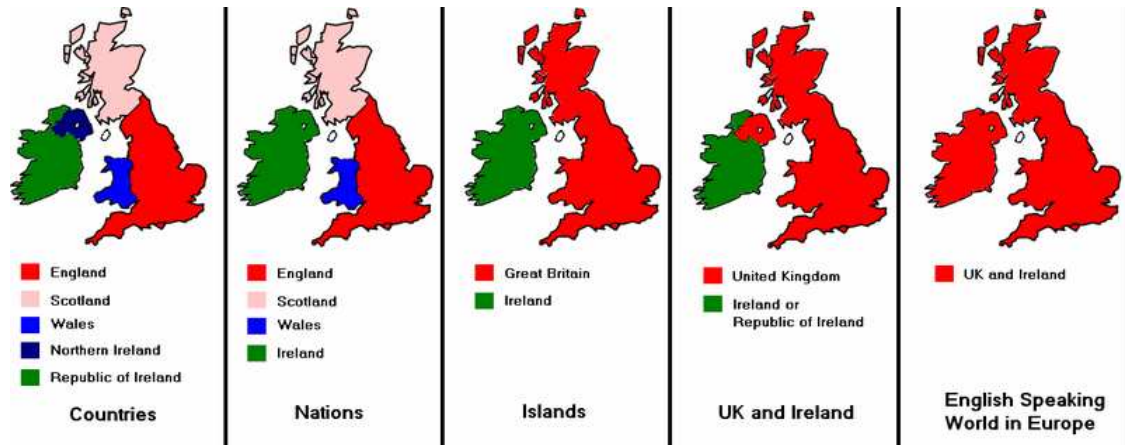


# SOME IMPORTANT FACTS ABOUT IRELAND

## IS IRELAND (EIRE) PART OF THE UK?



On the **island of Ireland**, there are two countries. The **Republic of Ireland** and **Northern Ireland**. When people say “Ireland”, they are typically referring to the Republic of Ireland.

Northern Ireland is a part of the United Kingdom, whereas the Republic of Ireland is an **independent** country

## WHY CAN'T YOU MAKE THE MISTAKE OF SAYING THAT AN IRISH IS BRITISH?

You should never *ever* make the mistake of assuming that Ireland is a part of the UK or Britain (or England)!



Irish and British have not had a good relationship for many years. In 1541 King Henry VIII of England forced the Irish Parliament to declare him King of Ireland and from this time up to the late 17th century thousands of **English and Scottish Protestant settlers arrived in Ireland to stay and to rule the country**. The Irish were mostly Catholics and from that moment their rights were reduced to the point that they couldn't have access to higher education or they couldn't own a lot of land. By 1778 Catholics held only about 5% of the land in Ireland.

## WHAT'S IRELAND'S OFFICIAL RELIGION?

There is **no official religion**, but about 80% of the population identify themselves as Roman Catholic. Ireland's patron saint is Saint Patrick.



## WHEN DID THE IRISH BECOME INDEPENDENT AGAIN?

All through the Irish history there have been many attempts of emancipation. Political leaders such as Daniel O'Connell, Charles Stewart Parnell, Éamon de Valera and Michael Collins have fought for the Irish independence, but it wasn't until **1937** that a constitution re-established the state as the Republic of Ireland.



## IS THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND AN EU MEMBER?

In 1973 Ireland joined the European Economic Community (now the European Union).

## WHY ARE THERE SO MANY IRISH IN USA?



In the 19th century Ireland was very poor and potatoes were the basic food. However, because of a plant disease, potatoes couldn't be eaten and people began to starve to death.

Between 1845 and 1851 two million people died or were forced to emigrate from Ireland. **Ireland's history of emigration** continued from this point onwards with the majority of Irish emigrants going to the United States of America

## WHY IS NORTHERN IRELAND (ULSTER) PART OF UK?

In Ulster, in the north of Ireland, **the majority of people were Protestants**. They had a majority in Parliament so they preferred to be part of UK.

Protestants systematically discriminated against Catholics and there was an open conflict between both groups.

Between 1969 and 1998 it is estimated that over 3,000 people were killed by paramilitary groups on opposing sides of the conflict.

Since 1998 considerable stability and peace has come to Northern Ireland.

