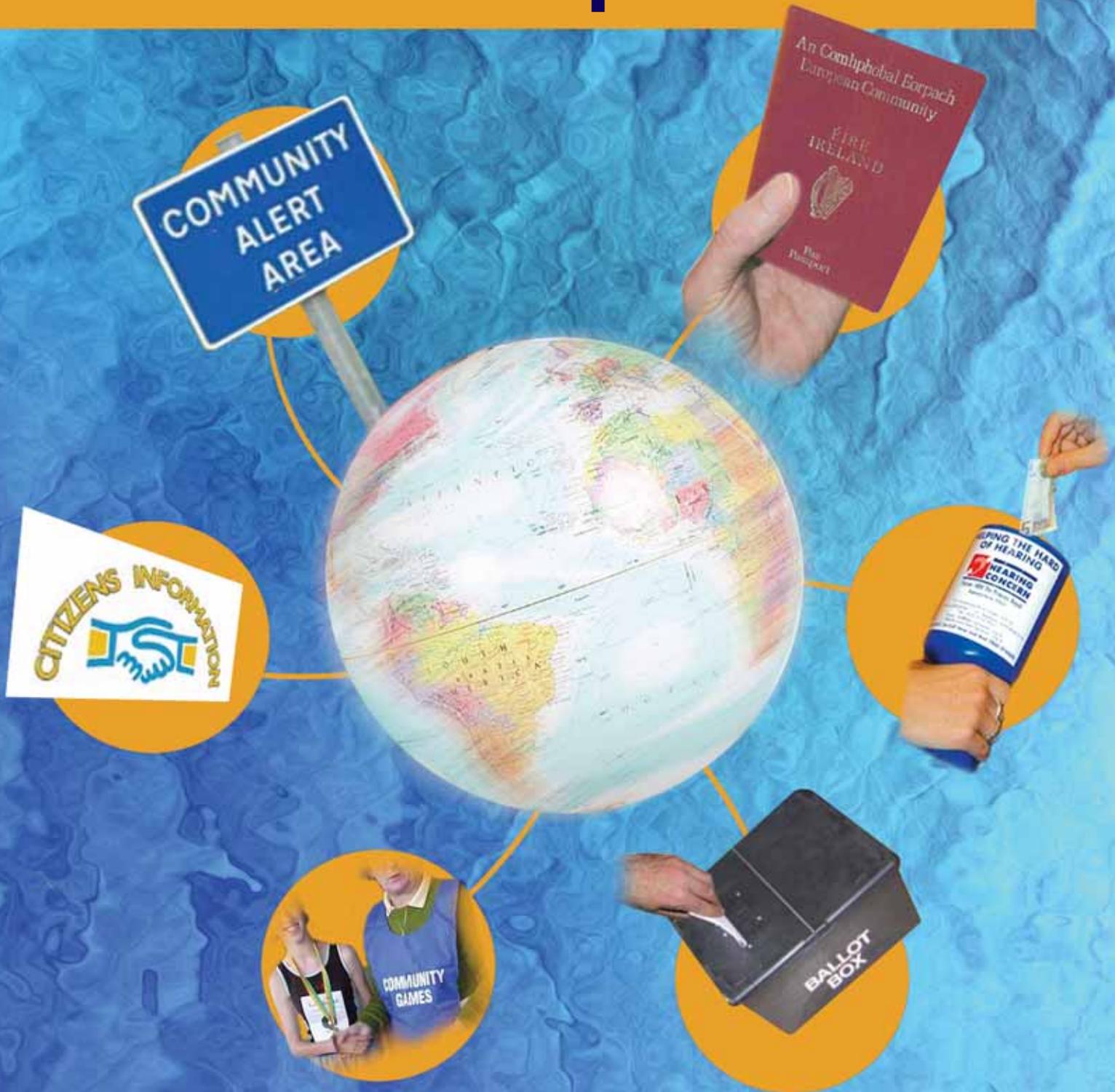


A Plain English Guide to Citizenship Terms



National Adult Literacy Agency
An Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

76 Lower Gardiner Street, Dublin 1

Tel: (01) 855 4332

Email: literacy@nala.ie

Web: www.nala.ie



A Plain English Guide to Citizenship Terms



National Adult Literacy Agency
An Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthactha do Aosaigh



Published by

National Adult Literacy Agency
76 Lower Gardiner Street
Dublin 1

© 2005 National Adult Literacy Agency

The copyright in this guide belongs to the
National Adult Literacy Agency.

ISBN 1-871737-55-9

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views of the
National Adult Literacy Agency.

Disclaimer:

Please note that these descriptions are a guide only and are not legal
definitions.

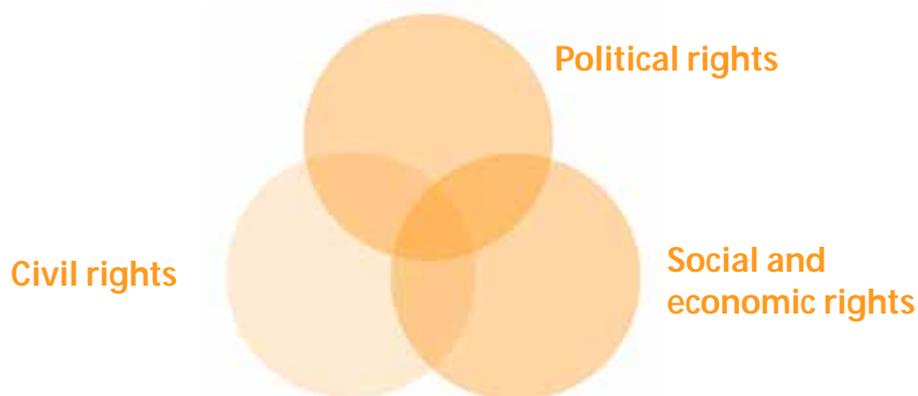
Foreword for NALA

This publication aims to provide an introduction to an area that is not always agreed upon by everyone: the realm of 'active citizenship'. Unlike the definitions in previous NALA plain English guides, which were accepted as standard, some of the definitions in this guide are contested. The very fact that this is the case raises a very important aspect of citizenship and citizenship education and that is the built-in notion of appreciating difference between ourselves and other 'citizens'.

Encouraging citizenship through education is what the *2005 European Year of Citizenship through Education* is all about. One of the key goals of the Year is to raise awareness of how education can help develop democratic citizenship and participation, as well as greater understanding and respect for diversity and human rights. The Year is about how all of us can be encouraged and supported to take part more fully in the lives of our community and beyond, and how we can be confidently involved in the decision-making that affects our lives and the lives of others.

Citizenship as a concept or reality is not new, but in recent times it has become more popular in public and educational debate. What is clear from these discussions is that there are many ways of describing or understanding citizenship, depending on who is talking. A common method is to refer to someone's legal status within a particular country. For example, if you hold an Irish passport, it means that you are legally an Irish citizen and can expect to enjoy all the rights and responsibilities that go along with being so.

As an Irish citizen, you can expect to have three different but overlapping rights. These are



Political rights allow you to take part in politics, to vote and to take part in developing our society.

Civil rights allow individual freedom, for example the right to express your own opinion.

Social and economic rights cover your economic welfare, allow you to share in the social heritage – the practices, rights and rules that are passed from one generation to the next – and the right to live a decent life compared with the general standards of living enjoyed by everyone else in the country.

All these rights are accompanied by responsibility to ourselves and to others. In our view, these rights are the baseline of citizenship; the foundations upon which peoples' 'active citizenship' can grow.

However, the concept of citizenship goes beyond the legal definition that denotes a person's national status and capacity to vote. The notion of citizenship is essentially about the relationship we have with society and others in society: How do we relate to our fellow citizens? How do we relate with the structures that govern us?

Lastly but fundamentally, it is about human flourishing, which involves enjoying rights and exercising responsibilities in various types of communities – from local to global. Active citizenship then refers to people having the ability and opportunity to take part in every aspect of the life of a society, including the decisions that affect them.

Of critical importance in any relationship between ourselves and others is the balance of power. Often, language can impose barriers that prevent people from accessing power, and more frequently it can be used to exclude people and prevent them from exercising their rights and responsibilities as citizens. This publication represents an attempt to 'demystify' and throw light on a concept that belongs to us all. We hope that it puts into plain English the terms and concepts that people use commonly and, in so doing, help any of us who up to now may have felt excluded from debates about citizenship.

Aidan A. Clifford

Director of City of Dublin VEC Curriculum Development Unit
National Co-ordinator, Education for Democratic Citizenship - Ireland

Sandra Gowran

Project Co-ordinator, *Citizenship2005.ie*.
2005 European Year of Citizenship through Education - Ireland

Absentee ballot

In some cases, if registered voters are not able to get to a polling station, they are allowed to fill in the ballot paper and post it to the Board of Elections before the date of the election.

Absolute monarchy

A government where a monarch (a king, queen or emperor) holds total power, and can make laws without having to consult a parliament or the people

Absolute poverty

When people do not have the necessities of life like food, housing or clothing; the term is used mostly when talking about developing countries, but there are people in Ireland who live in absolute poverty.

Access

Right or ability to get education, jobs and services.

See also Equality.

Act of Parliament

Law the parliament (or legislature) makes

Active citizenship

Active citizenship aims to make it possible for everyone to take part in all aspects of society including the following areas of activity:

- cultural,
- economic,
- political, and
- community.

When society promotes active citizenship, it aims to support:

- personal fulfilment,
- democratic participation,
- social inclusion, and
- a job for everyone who wants it.

Active citizenship is also about the people of a country being able to:

- make informed choices and decisions, and
- take action on their own and with other people.

Active communities

Communities in which citizens have the power to decide how to lead their own fulfilling lives. It also includes communities where no matter what their age, race or social background, everyone has a stake in society and a sense of belonging.

Active learning

The process of 'learning by doing'. In this type of education, the learner actively takes part in the learning instead of passively receiving information. Individuals or groups learn better when they learn in this way. People benefit from a variety of teaching methods; for example, role play, debate, discussion, and project work.

Activist

Someone who pursues a cause vigorously – especially a political or social cause

Adult Basic Education (ABE)

Education for adults that aims to develop the skills needed (such as literacy and numeracy) to fully take part in society

Agenda

A list of items that will be discussed at a meeting

Alliance Party

Political party based in Northern Ireland that is not aligned to either Republicanism or Unionism

Amendment

A change to the detail of a Bill, an Act or the Constitution

Amnesty

A general pardon or immunity, often sought where human rights have been abused

Analyse

Examine the details of something carefully so that you can understand or explain it

Anarchy

A society with political and social disorder caused by lack of government control and laws

Annexation

Take over an area under the control of a ruler or a state and add it to a larger state

Anthem

A song of praise, often about a particular country, when it is called a national anthem

Anti-social behaviour

Any behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress

Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)

A legal order that the court can make against anyone over the age of 10 years to prevent anti-social behaviour. It is a criminal offence to disobey the order.

Áras an Uachtaráin

Official home of the President of Ireland which is in the Phoenix Park, Dublin 7

Aristocracy

Ruling system based on social class, wealth, noble birth, superiority and elites

Armistice

Stage in a war when both sides suspend fighting to discuss possible peace terms

Assembly

A number of people gathered together for a special purpose – sometimes as a law-making body, as in the Northern Ireland Assembly

Assimilate

Adopt the culture of, and become similar to, the citizens of a country to which you have moved

Assimilation

When people of different ethnic origins develop, or are urged to develop, the basic attitudes, habits and ways of life of another national culture

See also Integration.

Asylum

What a state grants to an asylum seeker that lets them stay in a country to avoid threat of harm in their home country

Asylum seeker

Person who wants to be recognised as a refugee under the terms of the United Nations Convention of 1951

Attorney General

Main legal advisor to the Irish Government

Bb**Backbench**

The seats occupied in the Dáil by any member of the Irish Government who is not a minister

Balance of power

Description of how power is held; relevant when a major political party wants to form a government but needs support from a smaller party or independent members of parliament, in which case the smaller party or independent members then hold the 'balance of power' and may cause it to shift if they withdraw this support

Ballot

Way of voting, usually done using a ballot paper

Ballot paper

Paper used for a registered voter to record their votes without revealing their identity. The paper lists the names of the people (candidates) who are seeking election. The voter marks their choices on the ballot paper. Irish election ballot papers contain the names of the candidates, which appear in alphabetical order, together with their photographs and their party emblem (if they wish).

Bargaining

Agreement reached through negotiation between two or more people or groups

Benchmarking

Trying to make the salaries of civil and public servants the same as those of people doing similar work in the private sector, sometimes to keep staff in the civil and public service and discourage them from moving to the private sector. The Irish Government first introduced it as part of the PPF (Programme for Prosperity and Fairness).

'Best practice' or 'good practice'

Carrying out a job or providing a service along guidelines that have been found to work very well

Bias

Favouring one argument or person over others – usually unfairly; prejudice

Bill (law)

A proposal for a new law or change to an existing law. A Bill must pass through five stages and once voted through by the Oireachtas, the President of Ireland must sign it before it becomes law. It is then called an Act.

Biodiversity

The range of differences among living organisms of all kinds (on land and in water) including the environment where they live; includes diversity within species, between species and of environments

Bipartisanship

Co-operation on an issue or issues by two political parties, usually the two major parties controlling a government

BMW

Border, Midlands and Western Region, the 13 counties granted this regional title for the purposes of distributing European Union Structural Funds

Borough council

A type of local authority, usually in bigger towns. There are five borough councils in Ireland: Clonmel, Drogheda, Kilkenny, Sligo and Wexford.

Brainstorming

A way for a group to freely express their ideas on an issue or topic in group work or active learning settings. The leader uncritically accepts and notes every suggestion or idea. The leader encourages those taking part to give their ideas and opinions freely and will consider all of them – they do not have back them up with reasons, logic or ways of doing.

Bunreacht na hÉireann

The Irish Constitution – the publication that outlines the principles of the State and how the State should be governed. New laws must be written in line with the guidelines in the Constitution.

Burqa

A garment that a Muslim woman wears to cover herself from head to foot

Cc

Cabinet

The group of senior ministers in a government who decide government policy. The Taoiseach (the leader of the Irish Government) selects the members of the Cabinet. In Ireland the Cabinet is made up of the Taoiseach, all Government ministers and the Attorney General. The Cabinet is responsible for all the Departments of State and for the day-to-day business of the Irish Government. Discussions at Cabinet meetings are confidential.

Campaign

1. Organised competition for votes by people who are seeking election or a particular outcome from a referendum
2. Using the media, marches, written submissions, public meetings and other forms of communication and protest to change the behaviour of government, business, other large institutions or the general population

Candidate

Someone who goes up for election to a representative office

Canvassing

Trying to win votes by contacting voters directly, for example by going door to door or by using telephone, email and the Internet

Capital

Money or wealth needed to produce goods and services.

See also social and cultural capital.

Cathaoirleach

Irish for chairman, for example Local Authority Chairman, who is elected every year in each local authority from among the elected local authority members and who chairs their meetings

Caucus

A group or a meeting of people; especially refers to members of a political party with power to decide on policy

Cause

Goal or aim of a group of people, normally for social or political change, for example preserving the environment is the cause of environmentalists

CE

Short for Community Employment and also for Community Education

Ceann Comhairle

The Chairperson of the Dáil (the lower house of the Irish Parliament), who chairs its proceedings and must try to ensure that all parties and independent members are treated fairly

Celtic Tiger

Term to describe the boom in the Irish economy in the late 1990s and the first few years of this century

Censorship of Publications Board

An independent board set up by law to examine books and magazines for sale, with power to ban publications that it decides are obscene

Census

A detailed count of every person living in Ireland on a particular date, including people who don't usually live here, which takes place every five years and is carried out by the Central Statistics Office (CSO)

Central Criminal Court

A court that deals with serious criminal cases not dealt with by the Circuit Court

Centre

In politics this refers to a person or political party with moderate political opinions or policies. It is the middle point of political opinion where 'far right' is extreme conservatism and 'far left' is extreme socialism

Chancellor

Holder of a high office of state, as in Germany and Austria, where it is the title for the leader of the government. In the UK, the finance minister is called the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Charity

Help, money or resources to those in need, usually a response to the signs of poverty or disadvantage

Chief Justice

Head of the Supreme Court, the highest court in Ireland

Chief State Solicitor's Office

Office within the Attorney General's office that acts as the solicitor to Ireland, the Attorney General, Government departments and offices and State agencies

Chief Whip

Member of Irish Government who is responsible for organising and co-ordinating government business in Dáil Éireann

Circuit Court

Regional court that deals with some civil cases, a wide range of family law cases and criminal cases; also hears appeals from District Court decisions

Citizen

Member of a city, state or nation who enjoys its rights and protection, and of whom loyalty is expected; involves issues relating to rights and duties, but also ideas of equality, diversity and social justice

Citizens' Information Centres (CICs)

Independent services offering free and confidential information, advice and advocacy on social and civil services

Citizenship

A legal term to show a person's national status (see below for Irish citizenship) and more broadly, involving rights and responsibilities in various types of communities

Irish citizenship applies to:

- anyone born in Ireland if one of their parents was an Irish citizen at the time of their birth, or
- anyone born abroad if one of their parents was born in Ireland.

A child who was born in Ireland after 1 January 2005, neither of whose parents was an Irish citizen, will not be an Irish citizen unless one of the parents was lawfully living in Ireland for at least three out of the four years before the child's birth.

Citizenship education

Education for the whole person that aims to develop the ability to think critically and act responsibly while taking part in political, economic, social and cultural life

Citizenship rights

Rights that are enjoyed by a citizen, such as the right to vote and to live permanently in a particular country

City and County Development Boards

Boards set up in Ireland to bring together the key Government agencies and bodies in different areas to engage in long-term planning for counties over 10 years. There are 34 Boards in Ireland.

City councils

Local authorities with responsibility for services including housing, planning, roads, water supply and recreation facilities in particular cities. There are five city councils in Ireland.

Civic participation or engagement

People using the freedoms of democracy to do things like signing a petition, contacting their local councillor, voting, standing for election and becoming informed on issues

Civil rights

Rights that allow someone to live freely in a society and be fairly treated and are outlined in the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that was adopted by the United Nations Assembly in 1966

Civil law

Law that regulates relations between individuals or between individuals and corporations, and deals with property rights, personal dignity and freedom and personal injury

Civil liberty

Freedom to act, gather together with other people, think or speak as you wish, which is regulated only as much as is needed for the good of other people's basic human rights

Civil renewal

Developing strong, active and empowered communities, in which people are able to:

- do things for themselves,
- define the problems they face, and
- tackle problems in partnership with public bodies

Civil service

Officials who advise and assist Government ministers in running their departments

Civil war

A war in which different groups within a particular country fight one another, for example the war between the pro- and anti-treaty forces in Ireland in the 1920s or between the northern and southern states of the United States of America in the 1860s

Collateral damage

The description by military forces of the unintentional damage to buildings and deaths of civilians during war

Comment book

Place where someone who has an interest in an organisation or a service can write their views on a particular subject, area or service; sometimes known as customer complaints book

Common good, The

Something done 'for the common good' benefits all of the people involved.

Common law

Law that is based only on the customary way of doing things in a society or on court decisions, as distinct from statute law

Common Travel Area

Area that includes the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man, in which we can move without being controlled by immigration, except in limited circumstances

Commonwealth

Term that normally describes a group of countries or peoples united by a common interest, in particular the Commonwealth of Nations, whose members used to make up the British Empire

Communism

An economic and political system proposed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels and put into place after the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917, in which people share the ownership of all goods and property; also a system such as in the former Soviet Union where the government controls every aspect of a citizen's life and denies political freedoms

Communist Party

Political party that sticks to the principles of communism

Communist

Someone who supports communism

Community

Group of people who hold something in common. Community has tended to be associated with two key aspects: first, people who live in the same area; second, people who are 'communities of interest' because they share an identity – for example Afro-Caribbean people or people with a particular disability.

Community Alert Area

Local scheme where members of the community watch out for each other to protect against crime

Community Awareness of Drugs (CAD)

A network of voluntary workers who work to prevent drug misuse in their area, mainly through providing educational activities, with the help of other people in their communities

Community capacity building

Activities, resources and support that strengthen the abilities of people and community groups to take effective action and leading roles in developing their communities

Community Development Programme (CDP)

Irish Government programme for developing and funding local Community Development Projects

Community development

A process of people working together to change and improve the quality of their lives, the communities in which they live and the society of which they are part

Community engagement

A process of working with groups of people with a common bond to deal with issues affecting the well-being of those people; also helping people to understand and exercise their powers and responsibilities as citizens, which gives them the power to organise groups to work for their common good

See also Civil renewal.

Community enterprise

A social enterprise or initiative run by a community that may trade, or have ambitions to trade, and often takes place where social, cultural and economic resources are limited

Community policing

Local people directly involved in policing the community with the support of specialist gardaí

Community sector

1. People and groups who use 'community development' principles to achieve social change, justice and equality
2. A broad range of groups and organisations, not all of which apply community development principles, including small informal community groups, large multi-purpose community organisations, groups that cover the entire range of policy and services and other groups from nurseries and community centres to tenants' associations and sports groups.

See also Community development.

Conflict

Clash, fight, or disagreement between two or more sides, which may be short term or more rooted and long term

Conflict resolution

Range of responses to conflict that aims to help people to understand and resolve it
See also Conflict.

Congress (USA)

National law-making body or parliament of the United States of America, consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives

Consensus

Agreement that is generally acceptable

Conservation

Act of protecting and enhancing natural and cultural heritage; using resources wisely and not wastefully

Conservative

Generally a person or political party who wishes to keep things the way they are and maintain traditional values, in politics conservative people or parties are also called 'right', 'right wing' or 'right of centre'

Constituency

1. A set political geographic area, which has a specified number of political representatives
2. The voters or area that a TD represents

Constituency boundary

Line on a map around an area that marks out a political constituency

Constitution

Set of principles used by an organisation, including a country or a state, to govern, or the document setting out those principles; in Ireland the title of the Constitution is Bunreacht na hÉireann

Consultant

An external advisor hired to provide advice, planning, training or expert knowledge and experience

Consumer

Person who buys goods and services

Convention

1. Formal meeting of members, representatives or delegates like a political party, fraternal society, profession or industry, the group that attends this assembly
2. Agreement between states or sides, especially an international statement of principle dealing with a specific subject, for example the European Convention on Human Rights

Convention on the Rights of the Child

United Nations agreement that recognises the human rights of children

Co-operative learning

Learning from and with others

Corporate social responsibility

Duty of businesses to take responsibility for the effect they have on the economy, society and the environment

Council of State

Most senior advisory body to the President, consisting of current and past Taoisigh (Irish Prime Ministers), Presidents, Chief Justices, the Ceann Comhairle, the Cathaoirleach of the Seanad and the Attorney General

Councillor, local

Person elected to a county, city or urban district council

County or city manager

Person appointed to manage a local authority

Court

An institution presided over by a judge that:

- manages justice,
- decides if someone accused of a crime is innocent or guilty, and
- makes sure that people's legal rights are protected.

Court of Criminal Appeal

Court that hears some appeals relating to criminal convictions or sentences that were previously set in the Circuit Court, Central Criminal Court or the Special Criminal Court

Critical analysis

Investigating, interpreting, presenting and reflecting on issues; going beyond simple explanations and exploring issues in a more complex way

Cultural rights

Rights of a community to have its cultural identity respected, broadly concerned with 'identity', including language, membership of groups, communities and issues of heritage

Cultural capital

Resources not based on finance but on skills, knowledge, custom and education. A group with high cultural capital has good opportunities to take part in the life and culture of their society.

Culture

Different ways of living that a group of people build up and pass on from one generation to the next

Customs

1. Financial term that describes taxes on goods coming into a country
2. Common ways of behaving that are linked to culture, such as how people greet each other: some cultures shake hands and some kiss each other on both cheeks

Dd

Dáil Éireann (House of Representatives)

Lower house of the Irish National Parliament (Oireachtas), made up of elected representatives also known as TDs. There are 166 members of the Dáil and they represent 42 constituencies. The Dáil has a maximum life of five years.

See also Oireachtas.

Data Protection Commissioner

Independent person appointed by the Government, who is responsible for making sure that people can hold on to their right to privacy when information about them is held on computers or in manual or paper files. Anyone who feels their rights are being infringed can complain to the Commissioner.

Declaration

Official public announcement made and signed by representatives of more than one state

Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen

Statement made by the National Assembly in France in 1789 and one of the founding statements of what we accept as basic human rights for people today

Declaration, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR)

Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 10 December 1948 as a common standard of achievement for all people and all nations who signed up to it

Delegate

A representative at a political or other conference who has been given the power to make decisions at that conference on behalf of others

Democracy

1. Government by the people, either directly or through elected representatives
2. Form of society that favours equal rights, freedom of speech and a fair trial and tolerates the views of minorities

Democracy, direct

Any system where the people make the decisions directly instead of the elected representatives

Democratic rights

Rights to political or social equality for all

Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)

Unionist party in Northern Ireland founded by the Rev. Ian Paisley

Demonstration

Public exhibition of protest against or of sympathy with a particular cause

Deportation order

Order for the forced departure of an illegal foreign national from this country, which prevents them from returning

Deputy, Teachta Dála (TD)

Someone elected to Dáil Éireann to represent their constituency
See also Constituency.

Deregulation

Remove laws that restrict a commercial activity

Despot

A ruler who exercises absolute power, especially in a cruel or oppressive way

Developing country

A country where most people have a lower standard of living and access to fewer goods and services than do most people in high-income countries

Development

Social, economic, cultural and political improvements that meet the needs in people's lives, including personal, local, national and international needs

Development education

Education that aims to increase awareness and understanding of the rapidly-changing unequal world in which we live and is about helping people to understand the social, cultural, political and economic structures so that they can take part in local and global citizenship activities to transform how they affect them at personal, community, national and international level

See also Citizenship education and Citizenship.

Dictator

Person who has total power over a country or state

Dictatorship

Country in which one person or group has total power to govern

Diplomat

Someone appointed to represent Ireland in other countries and to manage our relations with those countries; Ireland has diplomatic relationships with 157 governments

Directive, EU

Legally binding instruction from the European Commission

Director of Consumer Affairs

Person who is employed to enforce a wide range of consumer protection laws within the Office of the Director of Consumer Affairs (ODCA), which is established by law with responsibility for providing advice and information to consumers. You may complain to the Director about false or misleading claims about goods, services and prices and they may prosecute the traders concerned or apply for a court order to get misleading advertisements withdrawn or changed.

Dirty politics

Unethical and illegal methods to gain political advantage

Disadvantaged area

Geographic area where a high proportion of people are affected by poverty, unemployment and social exclusion

Discrimination

Unfair treatment or laws against particular individuals or groups in society

District Court

Regional court that deals with some civil actions, family law cases and with criminal matters such as drunk driving, speeding, assault and criminal damage; also holds the initial hearings of serious offences to be tried in the higher criminal courts

Consumers can use a procedure in the District Court called the Small Claims Procedure to recover up to €1,270.

Diversity

Differences among people in relation to their culture, identity, language and abilities

Due process of law

The correct way for courts to handle a case when someone is charged with a crime

Ee

Economic rights

Rights to:

- work,
- an adequate standard of living,
- housing, and
- a pension if you are old or unable to work.

Economic policy

Approach to how money, business and taxes are managed

Economy

Activities involved in producing and consuming goods and services within a country or region

Ecosystem

Community of plants and animals that interact with water, air and other elements;

the quality is measured by how well the plants and animals can interact with each other and the elements and how many varieties can survive

Educate Together

Organisation that supports setting up primary schools in Ireland that are not linked to any one religion and guarantee equal respect to children and parents of all religions and to those who have none

Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC)

Education designed to help young people and adults take part in democracy and inform people about their rights and responsibilities in society and how they can use them; including the following types of education:

- human,
- civic,
- peace,
- global, and
- intercultural.

See also Citizenship education.

Election

Choosing a person or a government by voting

Elector

Person who votes or has the right to vote

Electoral Register/ Register of Electors

List of those who have the right to vote in national, local or European elections in Ireland, put together by city and county councils

Electorate

All those who have a right to vote in an election

Electronic voting

Using electronic equipment and computers to vote and count votes

Emblem

Object or picture that represents an event, a group or a cause, often in the form of a badge or shield

**Employee volunteering/
Employer-supported
volunteering**

Volunteering through a scheme supported by an employer, in which employers usually provide additional time off for staff to volunteer and sometimes match the funds raised by their staff, euro for euro

Empowerment

Making it possible for people to understand and exercise their powers and responsibilities as citizens

Ensign

Flag or a banner of a nation

Entitlement

Benefit you are entitled to; can apply to benefit provided by a particular government programme that you qualify for

Environment

Physical, geographic, biological, social, cultural and political conditions that surround an individual or organism and control what the organism is like and how it will survive

Equal pay

Same pay for work of equal value; traditionally this has referred to women and men getting the same pay for the same type of work

Equality

Fairness - recognising that everyone, no matter what their age, sex, gender, religion or ethnicity, is entitled to the same rights

Ethical

Relating to what is right or wrong based on moral values and standards

Ethnic

Reference to a group of people that share a nationality, history, culture or language

Ethnicity

Feeling of belonging to a particular racial or cultural group

Ethos

Ideas and beliefs of a particular person or group

European Commission

Civil service that supports the European Union

European Commissioner

Most senior civil servant over a specific department within the European Commission

**European Convention on
Human Rights**

International agreement set up by the Council of Europe in 1950 to protect human rights and incorporated into Irish national law in 2003

European Parliament

Organisation that represents the citizens of each Member State of the EU through Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), which are elected by each Member State

European Union (EU)

Political and economic union of the following 25 countries in Europe: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Ireland, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Cyprus, Malta, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia

Evaluate

Consider or study something carefully and decide what its strengths and weaknesses are

Evaluation

Act of considering what has been done and looking at what improvements could be made

Exit poll

Survey of a small percentage of people leaving the place where they have just voted, which asks them how they voted

Ff**Facilitator**

Person who helps a group or team to develop and work together effectively to reach their goal

Fair trade

Trade between buyers in the West and local suppliers in developing countries that provides them with the best price for their produce, increases the local people's profits and cuts out the 'middleman'

Fair trial

Trial conducted legally and free from bias

Fair

Unbiased or equal

Fatwa

Rule issued by Muslim holy men that believers are expected to obey

Federal system

A system of states that act as one unit but keep their internal affairs independent, as in the United States

Fianna Fáil

National political party founded in 1926 with a democratic Republican ethos

Fine Gael

National political party founded in 1933

Flag

Piece of cloth, often of various colours or decorated with emblems, that represents a country or a social group

Foreign national

Someone who does not have legal status in Ireland

Framework

Basic structure that supports something such as a building or a written system and gives it its shape

Franchise

Citizen's right to vote at elections

Free market

Economic system where prices are set by unrestricted or 'free' competition between privately owned businesses

Free trade

Trade between different countries that is free from government restrictions or taxes

Freedom of information (FOI)

1. When all information produced by and about a government is accessible
2. Legal framework and administrative system that allows for the recording and viewing of information related to government, except information that is subject to state secrecy, usually for security reasons

Freedom of speech

Right to speak freely on social and political matters without fear of persecution or suppression

Freedom

Right to act, speak or think freely

Front bench

Members of the Dáil (the Irish Parliament) who are ministers or shadow ministers. A shadow minister is a member of a party not in government, who covers the same area as a particular minister in a government and is a minister in name only

Gg**Garda Síochána**

Irish police force

Gender

1. The sex of living things, including people
2. The identity assigned to people because of their sex

Genetically modified (GM) food

Food that has its genetic code changed to make it resistant to diseases and weather conditions. It is not known how this might affect human, animal and plant health.

Gerrymander

Divide a voting area so as to give one political party a majority in as many districts as possible or weaken the voting strength of an ethnic or racial group, an urban population and so on

Global economy

All the activities involved in producing, exchanging and consuming goods and services on a global scale

Globalisation

Process of developing the world economy, but often harming the local economy, society and environment

Government

1. Group of senior ministers responsible for running a country or state
2. System used to manage the affairs of a state or nation
3. Ruling party in a state or nation, which has been elected or appointed to run it

Government Chief Whip

Person responsible for organising and co-ordinating Irish Government business in Dáil Éireann, who must make sure that the Government has a voting majority in the Dáil; also the Minister of State at the Department of An Taoiseach

Government department

Group of civil servants, headed by a minister, who are responsible for a specific area of work within the Irish Government. There are 15 Government departments in Ireland.

Government revenue

Income that a government gets from:

- tax,
- excise duties,
- customs, and
- other sources.

Grass-root movements

Groups, usually formed by people without political ambitions, who are so concerned about a particular issue that they feel compelled to organise with like-minded people

Grass roots

Basic level of society or of a group – especially as viewed from higher or more centralised positions of power – or basic source of support for a movement or group

Green card

Document giving permission to the owner of it to live and work legally in a country, usually associated with the USA

Green Paper

Discussion document about a proposed new law that sets out ideas and invites comment and views from individuals and relevant groups

Green Party

Political party in Ireland that was formed in 1981 and is part of a worldwide movement that believes in open government, renewable energy and military neutrality

Hh

Head of state

Formal leader of a country or a group of people organised under one government; in Ireland this is the President

Heritage

Culture, traditions and national assets passed from one generation to another

High Court

Court based in Dublin that has the power to hear all criminal and civil matters (including family law cases), that cannot be dealt with by the lower courts and also hears appeals from the Circuit Court in civil cases

Holistic

Relating to the whole of something or someone, not just the separate parts

Homeless

A situation when a person has no permanent place to live

Human rights

Rights that people have as human beings, whether recognised by their government or not. The first rights in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights are the right to life, liberty and security of the person.

Human Rights Commission

Body set up by the Irish Government to promote respect for and observance of the human rights of all people in Ireland and their access to equal opportunity

Human rights education

Education on human rights and the values of human rights legislation

Humanitarian Protection (HP)

Protection given to those who fail to qualify for asylum but who can show they need protection

Ii

Identity

Characteristics of a person or social group

Ideology

Set of linked ideas associated with a political or cultural plan

Immigration

Arriving into a country other than your own when you intend to live there permanently

Implement

Do things to make something happen

Inaugural

First

Incumbent

Person who holds a post or office

Independence

Freedom from the influence of others, or freedom of one country from the rule of another

Independent Councillor

TD or Senator who does not belong to a political party

Independent arbitration

System used to sort out a disagreement by using an independent system and independent officials

Indigenous people

Original inhabitants of a country; also called first peoples

Influence

Power to change the behaviour of someone or something

Institutional racism

Failure by everyone in an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin

Interculturalism

Valuing exchanges between cultural groups within society and seeing these exchanges as mutually enriching

Intercultural education

Education that helps to develop an understanding of different cultures and helps a learner to look at the world from other points of view; also promotes equality and human rights, challenges unfair discrimination, and provides the values on which equality is built

Interest group

People organised to take action about a cause or interest

IT

Information technology

Jj**Judiciary**

1. Branch of government concerned with upholding justice
2. System of courts and judges

Junior Minister

In Ireland, officially called Minister of State at the Department of... (Justice, Finance,...); the senior minister is called Minister for... (Justice, Finance,...)

Jury

Group of citizens selected from the community to sit in court to hear the evidence for and against a person accused of a crime and who tell the court whether they think the person is innocent or guilty

Justice

Principle of what is fair or right

Kk**Knowledge**

Facts or ideas you have learned through study or experience

Ll**Labour Court**

Independent body that seeks to resolve disputes between employees and employers

Labour movement

Broad organisation of workers that includes the trade unions and the Labour Party

Labour Party

Political party formed nationally in 1912 in Ireland

Laissez-faire

1. Ideology that is against a government interfering in economic affairs – other than the minimum necessary to maintain peace and property rights
2. Not interfering with individual freedom of choice and action

Lame duck

Elected official who is still in office after their successor has been elected

Law

Set of rules, especially those made by a parliament or a ruler, that the community recognises as binding

Lawyer

Someone who represents people in court or who gives advice on legal matters

Learner centred

Approach to education that puts the learner at the centre of the process and starts from the learner's own experience and needs

Leas-Cathaoirleach

Local authority or Seanad Éireann Vice-Chairman who chairs meetings when the Cathaoirleach is not present
See also Cathaoirleach.

Leas-Ceann Comhairle

Dáil Vice-Chairman who chairs meetings when the Ceann Comhairle is not present

Leave to remain

Permission granted by the Minister for Justice that allows someone to stay in the State; sometimes given for humanitarian reasons to someone who does not fully match the definition of a refugee under the 1951 Convention

Leaving Certificate

Final exam taken in Irish second level schools before pupils leave school

Left

People involved in politics who have traditionally been interested in political and economic equality, usually represented by socialist and progressive parties and parties of the workers

Left wing

More liberal or radical section of a political party, organisation and so on

Leftist

Generally someone whose political beliefs are liberal, socialist or radical

Legal rights

Rights of all individuals in a society as outlined in the laws of the State

Legislation

1. Law or a set of laws
2. Act of making laws

Legislative process

Series of actions that result in a law being made

Legislature

Law-making group in a country or state, usually made up of elected representatives. In Ireland it is the Oireachtas.

Liberal

1. Favours reform or progress in religion, education, economics or society; specifically, favouring political reforms tending towards democracy and personal freedom for the individual
2. Marked by generosity

Libertarian

Person who supports individual rights and minimal government involvement in people's lives, believing in the rights to liberty of speech and action and to own property

Liberty

Freedom from control; the right to act how you choose

Licence

Official document issued by a government that allows the holder to take part in a stated activity, for example a driver's licence

Lifelong Learning

All learning activity throughout life that aims to improve someone's knowledge and skills

Literacy

Ability to listen and speak, read, write, work with numbers and use everyday technology to communicate and handle information

Living standards

People's income and living conditions

Lobby group

Group that tries to get support for a particular cause; name refers to members of a lobby group who used to wait in the entrance hall (lobby) or corridors of parliament to see ministers and Members of Parliament

Lobbying

Trying to influence attitudes or decisions of politicians or governments

Local authority

Local branch of the Irish Government responsible for providing a wide range of public services and consisting of elected members and full-time executive and administration staff

Local court

Court held to judge minor crimes committed in a certain area, and settle local disputes

Local government

Local branch of the Irish Government that is usually elected by the residents of the area they manage

Mm

Manifesto

Political party's written statement of its principles, policies and goals

Marginalisation

Process of being kept out of the benefits of society including financial, educational and good housing

Market economy

1. An economic system where the decisions are made by those who take part in the market, with each person or group who takes part aiming to get the highest return they can while competing with the rest of the people in the market
2. The buying and selling of goods and services – an economy based on demand and supply of goods and services and on competition to sell them

Mayor

Elected or appointed head of a city or town

Media

1. Means of communication, including radio, television, newspapers and magazines
2. Journalists who work for radio, television, newspapers and magazines

Member of Parliament (MP)

Member of the British House of Commons, usually used to describe members of a lower house, who have 'MP' shown after their names

Member of the European Parliament (MEP)

An elected official who represents a region of their own country in the European Parliament

Mentor

Experienced person who gives help and advice to a less experienced person

Middle class

People who have a mid-level income. They may behave differently to the working and upper class.

Migrant

Someone who leaves their country of origin to settle in another

Military rule

When a military officer or officers form the government

Mind-mapping

Technique that links images of ideas and thoughts in the form of a picture

Minister

Member of the Irish Government responsible for running and managing a department and who may suggest and propose new or amended legislation

Minutes

Written record of a meeting

Monarch

Sole ruler of a country, who usually inherits the position, such as a king or queen

Monarchy

State or country where a monarch (a king or queen) holds the power or is the head of state. It is called an absolute monarchy when neither laws nor a constitution limit the monarch's authority. It is called a limited or constitutional monarchy when the monarch's power is limited by a constitution. In this case, the country is generally run by a government on behalf of the monarch.

Multiculturalism

When different cultures in society live side by side, but don't necessarily mix with each other

Nn

Nation

Group of people - often with the same language or culture - who think of themselves as a community, and have or think they should have their own government

National

Belonging to a nation

National Parliament (Irish)

Also known as the Oireachtas, which consists of:

- the President, and
- two houses – Dáil Éireann (House of Representatives) and Seanad Éireann (the Senate)

The Parliament's powers and functions are outlined by the Constitution of Ireland. See Bunreacht na hÉireann.

Nationalise

Bring under the control or ownership of a government; usually refers to an industry, for example coal mining or banking

Nationalism

1. Belief that a large group of people are, or should be, a nation with its own government
2. Policy of asserting the interests of a nation against other nations or the common interests of all nations
3. National spirit or devotion to the interests of one's nation

Native title

A form of ownership that recognises the long-term traditional relationship of indigenous people to their land

Natural resources

Materials that occur in nature and are essential or useful to humans, such as water, air, land, forests, fish and wildlife, topsoil, oil and minerals

Naturalisation

Process of someone becoming a full citizen of a country besides their own

Neighbourhood

People living around you

Neighbourhood action planning

Activity involving neighbourhood partners and groups joining together to develop plans for the neighbourhood with help from government-funded groups and agencies

Neo-conservatives (neo-cons)

Usually used to describe right-wing members of the US Republican Party who adopt a strict position against anybody, organisation or country that opposes their opinions and also try to have government policy follow their approach

Networking

1. Using events, usually social, to meet people who might be useful to your work
2. Exchanging information with a group of like-minded people

NGOs

Non-governmental organisations

Nineteen Eighty Four

Title of a book written by George Orwell in 1948 where he described his vision of a future from the trends he observed then; book is best known for the description of a Big Brother state where every movement and action of each person is monitored

Nominee

Someone who is nominated, or proposed by others, as a candidate for public office

Non-national

A person not born in the country in which they live

Non-partisan

Not involving or influenced by any particular political party

Not in my back yard (NIMBY)

Attitude of residents who oppose the development of any land near them, although they may agree with the need for such development elsewhere

Nutrition

Food and drink that promote health and growth

Oo

Oireachtas

See National Parliament.

Oireachtas Committee

Specialist committee that advises the Dáil on a broad range of legislative, social, economic and financial issues, examines government spending; Joint Committees are committees from both Dáil Éireann and the Seanad sitting and voting together

Oligarchy

Form of government where power is held by a small number of people belonging to a dominant class or group

Ombudsman

Public official who is responsible for investigating complaints against the Irish Government or the public service

Online Access to Services Information and Support (OASIS)

Public service information system available on the Internet, developed by Comhairle (a national advice and information agency)

Opposition

Second largest political party or group of parties in the Dáil that works to oppose what it believes to be wrong with Government policies and actions

Organisation

People who work together on a task

Pp

Pacifism

Belief that violence, especially war, must be avoided and that anyone who supports this idea should refuse to take part in war

Parliamentary (Dáil) question time

An opportunity for Dáil deputies to ask the Government questions about any issue the ministers are responsible for. In Ireland, the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) answers questions on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in Dáil Éireann. TDs (deputies) can also submit written questions seeking a written answer.

Parliament

Assembly of elected representatives, which forms the legislature of a state or a nation and may have both an upper and a lower house or one house only

Parliamentarian

Elected member of either the upper or lower houses of Parliament

Participation

Taking part or sharing in an activity such as public decision-making processes. This is crucial for democratic stability and is also one of the basic rights of each person

Peace process

Set of negotiations and activities where the aim is to bring peace between two or more warring parties

Petition

1. Document presented to parliament by a person or group of people asking for action on a matter
2. Making a formal request, especially to a person or a group in power

Philanthropy

Literally 'love for mankind'; based on the concept of selfless giving and the desire to do good for society

Philosophy

1. A study of knowledge, ideas and ways of thinking
2. Rules for or an approach to life

Plebiscite

1. Vote by all voters on a question, for example a referendum
2. Vote by members of a party to decide on a candidate or select a delegate

Pledge

Solemn promise to do a particular thing

Policy

Aim or a plan of action on a matter

Political agenda

Whatever is being discussed or dealt with in politics at any one time

Political freedom

Person's right to express their political beliefs freely and to vote as they want

Political ideology

Range of ideas that are the foundation for the aims and activities of a political party

Political literacy

Having knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and know-how to take part in public life

Political participation

Number of people who voted or took part in a referendum or in political activities

Political party

Group of politically like-minded people who work together to get power and influence

Political rights

Rights that allow a person to take part in political life, including the right to:

- vote,
- hold particular political views, and
- join a political party and influence public life.

Political spectrum

Range of political thoughts and approaches from the right to the left

Political values

Principles people believe should be used to govern their society, including equality, liberty and tolerance of diversity

Political wing

Part of an organisation that is involved in public life and politics

Political

Dealing with the distribution of power or connected with a political party

Politician

Someone who is active in politics and who sometimes holds a political office into which they have elected

Politics

1. Business of governing a country
2. Activities involved in gaining or using power

Poll

1. A count of people, votes or opinions
2. To ask and record the opinion of people
3. To receive a number of votes
4. An election

Polling card

A card sent to your home before the date of an election, which you cannot vote without. It states your elector number and where you can vote.

Polling

Organised procedure of voting

Polls

Place where votes are cast and recorded

Power

1. Control over others, especially by a government
2. Right of a government to act in a particular area, for example defence

PPF (Programme for Prosperity and Fairness)

A partnership agreement between the Irish Government, trade unions, employers, and farming groups

Precedent

1. What has been done before as a guide to what should be done now
2. Legal decision that courts will follow in future similar cases

Preferential voting

System when voters cast their votes in order of preference for candidates, giving number one to their first choice and the last number to the last choice

Prejudice

Strong dislike of those in a particular social group, for example a race, gender or religion, which does not make sense and means that the group is not treated equally

President of Ireland

Irish Head of State elected by the people of Ireland to serve a seven-year term (they can serve a maximum of two terms, 14 years). The President represents all the people when carrying out official engagements at home and abroad. The President is Supreme Commander of the Defence Forces. The formal powers and functions of the President are prescribed in the Constitution. See Bunreacht na hÉireann.

President

1. Chief officer in an organisation, who presides at meetings
2. Head of a republic
3. Person elected to be the presiding officer of the Senate or State legislative councils

Presumption of innocence

Presumption by a court that a person charged with a crime has not committed it, until the case against them is proved

Prime Minister

Head of the national government, the chief minister in some countries

Probation

A period of time after someone has completed a prison term, in which they are still under sentence and their behaviour is being tested

Process

Series of actions that you take to achieve a result

Progressive Democrats

Political party founded mainly by former members of the Fianna Fáil party in 1985, which has a right-of-centre economic policy

Progressive Unionist Party

Political wing of the Ulster Volunteer Force, which promotes union with Britain

Project

Plan or an undertaking

Propaganda

Spreading of ideas, information or rumour to help or injure an institution, cause or person

Proportional representation (PR)

Alternative to 'winner-takes-all' elections, in which the elector votes 1,2,3...in order of preference for the candidates listed on the ballot paper; means that minority interest groups may have a chance to be represented on an elected body

Prosecution

1. Legal proceedings against a person charged with a crime
2. Group of people who carry out these legal proceedings

Protest

1. Public statement of disapproval of an action or situation
2. Demonstration against an individual or against the action of governments or others

Public

1. Open or known to all people
2. The people, as a whole, of a community, state or nation
3. Concerning the public

Public policy

Course or line of action pursued by a government, ruler or political party

Public servant

Worker with the civil service, local authority or other state body

Public-Private Partnership (PPP)

Partnership between Irish Government, its agencies and the private sector to develop major projects such as motorways or schools

Qq**Quota**

Number of votes that a candidate usually needs to get to win a seat in parliament under the proportional representation (PR) system. PR uses a mathematical formula to distribute votes in order of the voter's preference.

See Proportional representation.

Rr

Race

Traditionally this meant different species of humans, with the implication that some were superior to others, but genetic research shows there is no single race-defining gene and so no biological reason for dividing the human population into different races. However, the term still exists in legislation.

Racial discrimination

Unfair treatment of an individual or group because of their racial or ethnic origin

Racism

Specific form of discrimination faced by ethnic minority groups based on the false belief that some 'races' are inferior to others because of their different skin colour, nationality or their ethnic or cultural background; deprives people of their basic human rights, dignity and respect

Radical

1. Marked by a considerable change from the usual or traditional – extreme changes to views, habits, conditions or institutions
2. A person who favours major political or social change

Radical reform

Major and dramatic changes, usually to an organisation and its activities

Rebellion

Open, organised and often armed resistance to one's government or ruler

Recycling

Gathering and putting waste material to use

Referendum Commission

Group established before each referendum to tell the public what the referendum is about and to give the arguments for and against the question

Referendum, Constitutional

Vote that occurs when the Government wishes to change something in the Irish Constitution, usually held in cases where the existing Constitution does not provide for such a change, and gives adults a chance to vote for or against the proposed change

Referendum

Vote by all voters on a question such as a change to the constitution

Reflection

When an individual or group actively considers what has occurred

Reformer

Someone who seeks to bring about change, especially political change

Refugee

1. Someone who, because of fear of persecution on grounds such as race, religion or political reasons, is not in their own country and is unable or unwilling to return
2. Someone who has been invited to Ireland when the Irish Government responds to a humanitarian request from groups like the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), for example during the Bosnian crisis in the 1990s
3. 'Convention' refugees: people who meet the requirements of the definition of a refugee under the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and is granted refugee status

Regional Assemblies

Assemblies that handle EU Structural Funds and co-ordinate delivery of public services in their region. The BMW Assembly covers the Border, Midlands and Western area; and the S&E Assembly covers the Southern and Eastern area.

Regional authorities

State-funded groups that:

- co-ordinate public services at regional level, and
- review the development needs and the provision of public services in their region.

There are eight regional authorities in Ireland and their members sit on monitoring committees.

Regulation

Law made by an Act of Parliament

Relative poverty

Having income and resources that are not enough to give a standard of living generally regarded as adequate by the society you live in

Religious right

Group that believes that everyone should follow strict rules for daily life, and have ideas based on a religious belief – often Christian (Old Testament) values

Renewable

Can be replaced or replenished, either by the earth's natural processes or by human action, for example air, water and forests

Representative democracy

System of government where electors choose representatives to make decisions for them

Representative

Someone who acts on behalf of others; person elected to a law-making body

Republic

State that is ruled by citizens and without a monarch

Republican

1. Person who wants to see a republic established in their country instead of a monarchy
2. Member of the right-leaning Republican Party in the USA

Republicanism

Political philosophy in favour of setting up a republic before any other political system

Research

Investigating and analysing ideas and sharing the results

Residence ('green card')*

Issued to someone to say they have the right to live in Ireland. The following people can apply for residence (but it is not automatically granted) at the Immigration Division of the Department of Justice:

- asylum seekers who marry Irish (or EU) nationals, and
- parents of Irish-born children

Successful applicants receive a registration document, the 'green card'. Residence must be renewed every 12 months.

*All non European Economic Area (EEA) nationals with any legal status in Ireland are issued with a registration card or 'green card'. However, the term is often used to mean residence on the basis of an Irish-born child.

Resistance

Secret organisation that fights against a foreign enemy or a dictator

Resolution

Usually something someone plans to do or to encourage others to do

Resources

Machines, workers, money, land, raw materials and other things that a country, organisation or community can use to produce goods and services make its economy grow or bring about change. Resources may be renewable or non-renewable. Countries must use their resources wisely to ensure long-term prosperity.

Responsibility

1. Obligation that a person or people must be able to account for. For example, a treasurer is responsible for how money is spent or saved and must be able to give an account of how this has been done.
2. Ability to respond – being responsive to others and being responsible for yourself

Restorative justice

When the justice system encourages people who have committed crimes to do something to make amends, for example community work

Returning Officer

Someone who oversees the counting of ballot papers during an election or referendum and who certifies and officially announces the results

Revolution

Complete overthrow of a government or political system

Right wing

The more conservative or reactionary section of a political party or organisation

Right

Conservative side of politics - generally the political party or parties that either support the way things are now or want to return to past ways of doing things; also means a political party that favours the free market system over a socialist system

Rule of law

Situation where everyone is equal before the law and no one is above the law, even a president, monarch or government

Ruler

Someone who rules or governs, normally linked with an absolute monarch or a dictator

Rules

Regulations governing conduct or behaviour

Ruling party

Political party that controls the government

Running mate

When two people from the same party are going for election in the same constituency, the candidate who is usually expected to get a lower proportion of the votes is said to be the 'running mate'. In the US, the vice-presidential candidate is the running mate of the presidential candidate.

Ss

Seanad Éireann

Irish Senate

Seat

A place in an elected political assembly such as a parliament or county council

Secession

Withdraw formally from an alliance or association, such as a political organisation, especially from a federation of states

Secret ballot

Voting system where voters cast their votes privately and cannot be pressured to vote in a certain way

Segregation

Separation of one racial group from another, as occurred in schools, transport and other public facilities in many parts of the United States until integration was gradually introduced from the 1950s until the 1980s. South Africa's 'apartheid' system was another example, as was the former exclusion of Aboriginal people from swimming pools in New South Wales.

Select Committee (Oireachtas)

Consists of members of the Dáil and Seanad and is usually set up to review the work of Government departments

Self-government

Political independence of a country, people or region

Senate

The upper house in parliament. In Ireland the Senate is called Seanad Éireann and it has 60 members. Eleven of these members are nominated by the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) and 43 are elected by specific groups, such as the universities. In Australia and the United States, the Senates are made up of representatives from the states in their federation.

See also Federal.

Senator

Member of a Senate

Shadow ministers

Members of the opposition that 'shadow', or follow closely, the areas of responsibility of ministers in a government

Sharia

Religious-based legal system devised by Muslim holy men, which usually operates in an area where most of the population are Muslims

Sinn Féin

Republican party, political wing of the IRA
See also Republican.

Slavery

Situation in which someone is not free, but is owned by another person and can be bought and sold and made to work against their will; slavery was made illegal in most parts of the world in the nineteenth century, but continues in some places

Social capital

Resources that are based on relationships and networks of influence and support and enable people to get help from each other

Social cohesion

A sense of belonging in the community, involves a commitment to continually improving the quality of life and well-being for its members by actively removing barriers and the causes of division

Social Democratic Party

Political party with a centre-left ideology

Social economy

Development of social and economic enterprises that will benefit the regeneration of a community, for example childcare services

Social exclusion

People or places being excluded from the outcomes and opportunities enjoyed by mainstream society, due to problems that can include:

- unemployment,
- poor skills,
- low incomes,
- discrimination,
- poor housing,
- high crime environments,
- bad health, and
- family breakdown.

Social partnership

When government, the private sector, the voluntary sector and the unions produce a strategy for social and economic development that covers issues such as wages, industrial action, housing, transport and education

Social rights

Rights that allow a person to have a decent standard of living, including the right to housing, employment, good nutrition and health care

Social security

State support for people when they are unemployed, ill or retired, through payments each week or month

Social welfare

See Social security.

Socialism

System of society where the community owns the businesses and the land

Society

People living as members of a community, including the members of a nation; also a group of people who come together to achieve a particular goal, such as the Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ISPCA)

Solidarity

When people are able to recognise the rights of others and are willing to act to defend them

Sound bite

Brief, quotable remark or excerpt, such as a speech made by a politician or a candidate for political office, which is repeated on radio and TV news programmes; regarded by some as being trite and superficial

Special Committee, Oireachtas

Committee set up to review new bills coming before the Dáil and consisting of members of the Dáil and Seanad

Spin

1. Public relations (PR) activity, that sometimes focuses exclusively on the positive and is used as a weapon against a political opponent or the opposition party
2. When information is interpreted in a particular way or with particular emphasis, sometimes to enhance the public image of, or to minimise political damage to, a politician

Spoiled vote

Vote made invalid when someone fills in the ballot paper incorrectly, either by mistake or deliberately as a protest

Stakeholder

Anyone or group who has an interest in or can be affected by a group action, plan or initiative

State

1. How people in a particular territory are governed. See also Territory.
2. Any of the regions, each more or less independent in internal affairs, which together make up a federal union. An example is the United States of America.

Status

Position or standing in the community or society

Status quo

State of affairs as they are now or as they were before a recent change

Statutory

Decided, set up or controlled by law

Steering group

Group with specific skills who guide the development of a project and its completion

Stereotyping

Labelling people or making assumptions about them based on the social group they belong to, for example their race, religion, nationality or age.

Strategy

Medium- to long-term plan to achieve something

Strike

To stop work to demonstrate or to demand an employer meets workers' demands

Subject

Someone who lives under the rule of a monarch

See also Monarch, Monarchy.

Submission

Suggestions or arguments made orally or in writing to some authority such as a parliamentary house, a committee or a court; a written paper placed before a committee for consideration

Suffrage

The right to vote

Suffragist

Historically, someone who wanted women to have the right to vote

Supreme Court

Highest court of appeal, that also interprets the constitution of a country

Sustainable development

Development that meets the needs of the people today without harming the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Tt

Tánaiste

Irish Deputy Prime Minister

Tally men

Members of a political party who carry out an unofficial count of the ballot papers during an election or referendum

Taoiseach, the

Head of the Irish Government, nominated by the Dáil. The Taoiseach also acts as a spokesperson for the Government on major policy issues and chairs Cabinet meetings

TD, how to become one

To be eligible for membership of the Dáil you must:

- be a citizen of Ireland,
- be over 21 years of age, and
- must not be disqualified from election to the Dáil.

To become a TD you must complete a 'nomination paper' and present it to the returning officer of the constituency in which you are standing. It is possible to be nominated as a candidate in more than one constituency. You don't have to be living in a constituency to be nominated. If you wish, you may state the party you belong to on your nomination paper. You may also submit a photograph and a political party emblem to appear on the ballot paper.

TD, Teachta Dála

Member of Dáil Éireann

Terms of reference

1. Something referred for inquiry to a committee
2. What powers a committee has and what areas it can investigate
3. What somebody is supposed to do

Territory

1. In the federal system of government, an area that has not been given the full rights of a state, for example the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory
2. Land and waters under the control of a state or ruler
3. Any region or area of land

Terrorism

Systematic use of terror especially to force people to do something they don't want to do

Think tank

Institute, corporation or group set up to research a range of areas, such as social problems, which may make recommendations to the government on public policy

Third way

Political philosophy that takes from the right and left, but is different to both; promoted by British Prime Minister Tony Blair

Tradition

Belief, custom or practice that is handed down from one generation to another

Travel document

Document, such as a passport or visa, used to travel to and enter other countries

Traveller

Member of an Irish ethnic group that travels from place to place and has its own identity, culture and history. There are about 21,000 Travellers in the Republic of Ireland.

Treaty

In international law, a formal agreement between states; often outlines peace or trade agreements

Trial

Examination of a person in a court of law to decide whether they are guilty or innocent

Tribunal of enquiry

Enquiry with judicial powers that is set up to investigate things such as corrupt practices, for example corrupt payment to politicians for illegal land re-zoning and corrupt practices of gardaí

Trustee

Someone who holds money or other property in a trust for the benefit of someone other than themselves

Tyranny

Uncontrolled exercise of power, often by an oppressive or unjustly severe government or a ruler

Tyrant

An absolute ruler who uses his or her power unjustly or oppressively

Uu

Ulster Unionist Party

Political party that wants to maintain the link between Northern Ireland and Britain

UN

United Nations

Unionism

Political philosophy that supports political union between Northern Ireland and Britain

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Key statement of human rights today, written in 1948 in response to the genocide carried out by Nazi Germany

United Nations

International organisation founded after World War II to try to achieve international security, by providing help and solutions for conflicts between countries, to help refugees and to develop many health, development and cultural programmes

Vv

Values

Beliefs and set of rules that are important to a person

Values education

Education that nurtures learners while respecting their values

Veto

1. Saying 'no' in a political context, for example by blocking or rejecting a proposed law
2. Power of the President to refuse to sign a bill passed by the Dáil preventing it from becoming law, in which case the President can refer the bill to the Council of State for advice

Visa

Form that allows people from one country to enter another and to stay there for a limited time; not needed if you are a member of an EU country and you are visiting another EU country

Voluntary sector

Collection of independent groups that do things not for profit but are not public or local authorities; normally formally constituted, have paid staff and may or may not use volunteer help

Volunteer

1. Someone who gives their services free of charge, for example to help others or the environment
2. Someone who offers to do something before being asked to do it

Volunteer-involving organisation

Common term used for voluntary and community sector organisations that involve or work with volunteers

Vote

1. Formal expression of a choice, such as putting one's hand up or marking a piece of paper
2. Total number of votes

Voting eligibility

- You must be a citizen of Ireland.
- You must be 18 years of age by the day the Register of Electors comes into force.
- Your name must be on the Register of Electors.

Ww

War chest

Fund for running a political campaign, made up of money given to a candidate by other people and through various fundraising events

Wealth

1. All the things a person owns
2. The total amount of goods and services in a country

Welfare

See Social security.

Whip

Political party manager in parliament who is responsible for organising members of their party to take part in debates and votes and who assists in arranging the business of a parliament

White Paper

Government policy document outlining the plan for an area of work; normally the last policy document before a new piece of legislation

Working class

People who are manual workers and labourers

Working conditions

Hours of work, levels of pay, physical conditions and legal rights in the workplace

Xx

Xenophobia

Being hostile or afraid of foreigners, particularly when people are hostile to people who have a different ethnic background to themselves

What is NALA?

The National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) is a non-profit membership organisation, concerned with national co-ordination, training and policy development in adult literacy work in Ireland. NALA was established in 1980 and has campaigned since then for the recognition of, and response to, the adult literacy issue in Ireland.



National Adult Literacy Agency

An Áisíneacht Náisiúnta Litearthachta do Aosaigh

National Adult Literacy Agency

76 Lower Gardiner Street

Dublin 1

Telephone: (01) 855 4332

Fax: (01) 855 5475

Freephone support line: 1800 20 20 65

Email: literacy@nala.ie

Websites:

NALA website: www.nala.ie

Literacy learning and tuition website: www.literacytools.ie

Read Write Now TV literacy series 5 website: www.readwritenow.ie

NALA Cork

Telephone: (021) 431 7011

Fax: (021) 431 5054

Email: mmurray@nala.ie

NALA Mullingar

Telephone: (044) 40374

Fax: (044) 45 834

Email: pkiernan@nala.ie



This project is funded by the Irish Government and part-financed by the European Union under the National Development Plan 2000 - 2006