

LESSON  
**5.**



**LESSON DESCRIPTION**

The fifth lesson in the module will explore the experiences of women immediately before and during the Easter Rising. The lesson outlines women’s involvement in both separatist and suffrage issues in the period prior to the Rising. The lesson then examines the role of women within the nationalist organisations and looks at their participation in the fighting of Easter Week. Finally, the lesson looks at the role of civilian women during Easter Week.

**LESSON INTENTIONS**

1. Understand the concerns and intentions of women involved in the nationalist movement of the early twentieth century.
2. Describe the involvement of women in the events of 1916.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the roles of women in the Easter Rising through the use of digital media.

**LESSON OUTCOMES**

- Be able to discuss the roles women played in the development of revolutionary nationalism in Ireland.
- Employ ICT skills to express an understanding of the topic.

**HANDOUTS AND GUIDES**

- Lesson 5 Key Information
- Audio Editing Storyboard
- Video Editing Storyboard
- Digital Imaging Design Sheet

**DIGITAL**

- Suggested Additional Resources

**SOFTWARE**

- Audio Editing Software e.g. Audacity
- Video Editing Software e.g. Movie Maker
- Image Editing Software e.g. GIMP

**HARDWARE**

- Whiteboard
- PCs / Laptops

**MODULE 4. THE EASTER RISING**  
**5: WOMEN AND THE RISING**



ACTIVITY	LEARNING OUTCOMES
<p><b>Starter</b> – Play <b>Suggested Additional Resources 6</b> for the students. The video is an overview of Women in the 1916 Rising.</p>	<p>The selected video clip will act as an introduction to the lesson by describing to students the role played by women in the Rising and identifying some key female personalities involved.</p>
<p><b>Using the Key Information, teachers will have a choice of activities to engage students.</b></p> <p>Teachers may choose to split the class into groups and ask students to use the discussion points to discuss some aspects of the Key Information. Students will then share their discussions with the rest of the class.</p> <p>Alternatively, teachers may want to use the Questions/Tasks as group discussion questions or to test individual knowledge.</p> <p>The Alternate Task challenges students to come to an agreement on a topic on which they have differing opinions.</p> <p><b>*If possible, allow students to research the topic on the internet – suggested additional resources / search engine.</b></p>	<p>The Key Information is designed to cover the information within the topic and meet the learning intentions.</p> <p>The discussion questions on the Key Information are designed to meet the learning intentions through interaction and Q&amp;A.</p> <p>The questions on the Key Information are designed to meet the learning intentions through the students understanding of the information.</p> <p>The various activities should allow the students to learn while they interact. The activities will also serve to reinforce knowledge and encourage discussion.</p>
<p><b>Plenary</b> – Display the picture from <b>Suggested Additional Resources 5</b>. The sequence of pictures shows how Elizabeth O’Farrell has been removed from the image over the years. Despite the role played by women in the Rising and their success in gaining universal suffrage in the years after, why do students think women were ‘forgotten’ when it comes to remembering the Rising?</p>	<p>The plenary discussion will focus on how the role of women in the Rising sometimes gets overlooked. The images and subsequent discussion will encourage students to think about the social factors that may have caused the role of women to be overlooked or deliberately downplayed in the decades after the rebellion.</p>

KEY  
INFORMATION  
5.

# WOMEN AND THE RISING

Women were involved in the Easter Rising at every stage of its planning and operation. However, they often had to struggle to win the right to play a role within the revolutionary movement. Within nationalism, as within Irish society more generally, there were differing views about the role women should play in politics. Although republicans and socialists often expressed egalitarian (equality for all people) ideals, many Irish nationalists had more traditional views about the role of women.

## SUFFRAGE AND SEPARATISM

At the beginning of the twentieth century, women in Britain and the British Empire did not have the right to vote or to participate equally in politics. Suffrage was a major issue of the day. Women's suffrage is the right for women to vote on equal terms with men.

Irish republicans and Irish suffragists shared an interest in radical politics, but they had different goals.

The **republican movement** advocated an Ireland of equals. However, the republicans saw the establishment of an independent Irish Republic as more urgent than suffrage

Many suffragists felt that the republican leadership was ignoring the struggle for women's rights in Ireland. Some leading suffragists were Protestant unionists for whom separatism held little appeal



A Women's  
Suffrage lapel pin  
from the early  
20th Century

### 1.)) DISCUSSION

What ideals might have united the separatists and the suffragists?

- Radical Irish women - a small minority of society - disagreed among themselves as to which was more important: feminism or nationalism.
- Many, but not all, of the women who were involved in the republican movement were also involved in or supported the suffrage movement.
- Nationalist women believed that Irish women's suffrage under British rule was pointless, as it would give them a vote for a parliament that they did not recognise. Republican women appealed to these supporters of women's suffrage to join the fight against British rule.

2.))) DISCUSSION

What sorts of activities were performed by the republican women's organisations?



Na Fianna Éireann scouts taking part in field medical training



Maud Gonne led Inghinidhe Na hÉireann from 1900-1914

## WOMEN AND THE REPUBLICAN MOVEMENT

- **Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Ireland)** was a women's organisation originally formed to protest against the 1900 royal visit to Ireland. The organisation aimed to educate and radicalise parts of Irish society that were less involved in politics, particularly women, children, and the working classes. Inghinidhe na hÉireann was primarily a cultural organisation that wanted to promote Irish culture and language, and was more concerned with Irish separatism than with feminism or suffragism. In 1914, Inghinidhe na hÉireann merged with **Cumann na mBan**.
- Constance Markievicz, a leading member of Inghinidhe na hÉireann, went on to form **Na Fianna Éireann** (Soldiers of Ireland) in 1909, along with Irish Republican Brotherhood member Bulmer Hobson. This was a scouting organisation consisting mainly of boys, although girls were sometimes permitted to join. Its members were given military training, uniforms, and equipment. The organisation promoted Irish separatism and cultural nationalism. Members of Na Fianna Éireann took part in gun-running operations, and played a part in the Rising: some boys acted as messengers during Easter Week or even fought in the rebel garrisons.
- **Cumann na mBan** was formed in 1914 as a woman's organisation that aimed to support the male Irish Volunteers. Exactly what kind of support they would offer was never fully decided – some in Cumann na mBan thought they should be an independent organisation with their own leadership actively involved in military and strategic activities. Others felt the organisation should merely provide support for the Irish Volunteers by organising protests, offering nursing services, or working "behind the scenes" to fix uniforms or sew banners. Although few Cumann na mBan members believed women should fight as soldiers, the organisation played an active role in the preparations for the Rising as well as the activities of Easter week. A handful of female rebels, including Countess Markievicz, took up arms themselves but most helped by cooking or running messages.

## WOMEN IN THE EASTER RISING

The women who had been involved in the preparations for rebellion insisted on their right to take part in the Rising itself. About 200 women participated in the fighting of Easter Week, most of them members of Cumann na mBan or the Irish Citizen Army. Although excluded at first, women were reluctantly allowed to join the fighting on Easter Monday (except at Boland's Mill, where Éamon de Valera rejected any female assistance in the fighting). Once they joined the other rebels, the women were largely given non-combat roles: cooking, nursing, and washing up. Most Irish rebels – like their British army opponents – believed that women should be confined to roles thought suitable to their gender. **The Irish Citizen Army** gave its female members a greater military role: most ICA women were armed, although few took part in combat. The most prominent role of the female rebels was that of messenger: women carried orders, weapons and ammunition through the Dublin streets during the fighting – a dangerous task.

Around 80 women were arrested at the end of Easter Week. It had been widely assumed (by the public and by the rebels themselves) that they would not be arrested. Many of the women had to insist – to both Volunteers and British soldiers – that they be treated as combatants, demanding the same treatment as their male compatriots. Although they were initially held in unhygienic and crowded facilities, most were released after just one or two weeks.

3.))) DISCUSSION

How big a role did women play throughout the Rising?

Despite the advance of womens' rights, the conservative and Catholic nature of the Irish state that emerged from the revolution ensured that women did not win an equal role in society.



Constance Markievicz

## AFTER THE RISING

Immediately after the Rising, women played an important part in the transformation of Irish public opinion and in reviving organised resistance to British rule. Some of these activities included:

- Raised funds for the republican cause
- Organised protests against conscription
- Organised prisoner relief agencies
- Lead commemorations to the memory of the 1916 leaders

The Easter Proclamation advocated the equality of men and women, guaranteeing “equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens”, and promising a “National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women”. The commitment to universal suffrage, enshrined in the Proclamation, was honoured: in 1918, property-owning women over the age of 30 were given the right to vote throughout the UK; in 1922, all women over 21 were given the right to vote in the new Irish Free State.

## SOME OF THE LEADING WOMEN OF IRISH REPUBLICANISM

- Born into a wealthy English family, **Maud Gonne** was an actress, cultural nationalist and political activist. She was the founder of **Inghinidhe na hÉireann**.
- **Helena Molony** was a feminist and socialist, an actress in the Abbey Theatre, and the editor of **Bean na hÉireann**. She fought in the Rising, taking part in the attack on Dublin Castle.
- **Kathleen Lynn** and her partner **Madeleine Ffrench-Mullen** were doctors, suffragettes, and revolutionaries. They took part in the Rising and were briefly imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol.
- **Constance Markievicz**, perhaps the most well-known woman to fight in the Easter Rising, was a revolutionary nationalist from an upper-class, landed background. She was also a suffragette. Markievicz was a leader in nationalist organisations such as **Inghinidhe na hÉireann** and **Na Fianna Éireann**. She was made an officer in the **Irish Citizen Army**, and on Easter Monday she served as second-in-command to Michael Mallin at Stephen's Green. After the surrender, Markievicz was arrested and sentenced to death. The death sentence was reduced to imprisonment because of her gender (she was imprisoned until the general amnesty of prisoners in 1917). Markievicz was the first woman to be elected to the British House of Commons during the 1918 general election (being elected as a Sinn Féin MP, she refused to take her seat, under their abstentionist policy). She would also go on to become a minister in the republican Dáil government.

# PERSPECTIVES

1. "Commandant Mallin [...] finally agreed, though not at all willingly, for he did not want to let a woman run this sort of risk. My answer to this argument was that we had the same right to risk our lives as the men; that in the constitution of the Irish Republic, women were on an equality with men. For the first time in history, indeed, a constitution had been written that incorporated the principle of equal suffrage."

**Margaret Skinnider, on undertaking military action, from her autobiography 'Doing My Bit For Ireland' (1917)**

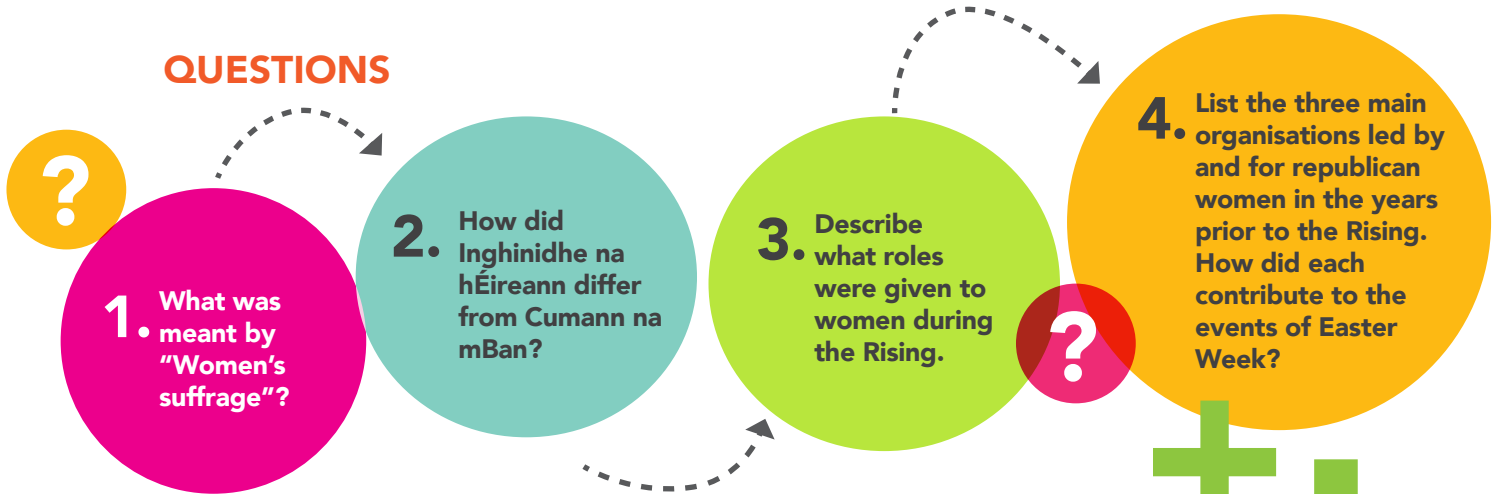
2. "The men gave each of us their small arms to do as we liked with, thinking we were going to go home, but we were not going to leave the men we were with all the week to their fate; we decided to go along with them and be with them to the end, whatever our fate might be."

**Rose McNamara, speaking a few days after the events of the rebels' surrender on 28th April 1916**

3. "...without the participation of her women, Mother Ireland was going into battle with one arm tied behind her back."

**Maud Gonne, quoted in the 1976 biography 'Maud Gonne' by Samuel Levenson**

## QUESTIONS



### EXTENSION ACTIVITY 1:

What was different about how the Irish Citizens Army treated women?

### EXTENSION ACTIVITY 2:

Imagine you are a member of Cumann na mBan, reporting for duty on Easter Monday. Describe your experience when you arrive (1 paragraph).

## TASK 1

Carry out some research and write a short profile of the following women and their role in the Easter Rising:

- Constance Markievicz
- Winifred Carney
- Elizabeth O'Farrell
- Margaret Skinnider
- Helena Molony

## TASK 2:

Despite the role women played in the Rising and the granting of suffrage, claims suggest that the role of women has been airbrushed from history. Carry out some research and answer the following question:

In your opinion, how big a role did women play in the Rising? Use evidence to support your answer (evidence could come in the form of audio, video, imagery, quotes, eye witness testimony, etc...).

## ALTERNATE TASK QUESTIONS

How was women's suffrage reflected in the republican movement at the time?

Explain why you think some women who were campaigning for universal suffrage were persuaded to get involved with the rebels?

What evidence is there to suggest that the leaders of the Rising respected women and their rights to universal suffrage?

Constance Markievicz is often referred to as the most prominent female figurehead in the Rising. Why do you think this was so?

How did Inghinidhe na hÉireann differ from Cumann na mBan?

What evidence is there to suggest that women were not treated as equals during and after the fighting?

Women fighting in the Rising seen a free Ireland as the key to universal suffrage." How much do you agree with this? Is there any evidence to support this statement?

Why do you think women wanted to be involved in the frontline fighting?

## ALTERNATE TASK

- The class will be split up into groups. Depending on the number of groups, choose an equal number of questions (e.g. 6 groups = 6 questions)
- After the questions have been chosen, each group will be given a sheet of paper with a question written on top – each group will start with a different question
- Each group has a set amount of time to answer their question. When the time is up, the question sheet will be passed onto the next group to answer the question. This process will repeat until all groups have had a chance to answer each question
- When complete, discuss the answers to each question. Have all the answers sufficiently answered the questions?

## SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



1) <http://www.rte.ie/news/2014/0328/605079-cumann-na-mban-centenary/> - Cumann na mBan – Forgotten Women of Revolution



2) [http://www.rte.ie/tv/whodoyouthinkyouare/social\\_ryan2.html](http://www.rte.ie/tv/whodoyouthinkyouare/social_ryan2.html) - Information on Cumann na mBan



3) [http://1916rebellionmuseum.com/1916-easter-rising/elizabeth-ofarrell?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1408552005.9371600151062011718750](http://1916rebellionmuseum.com/1916-easter-rising/elizabeth-ofarrell?doing_wp_cron=1408552005.9371600151062011718750) – Elizabeth O'Farrell's story of the surrender



4) <http://www.easter1916.ie/index.php/people/women/> - Women of the Rising



5) <http://www.easter1916.ie/index.php/rising/saturday/> - Saturday – Day of Surrender



6) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiZJ2C8EwSA> – Women in the 1916 Rising





# DIGITAL TASKS

## AUDIO EDITING TASK



### TASK DESCRIPTION

**Students will work in pairs to script, record and edit a mock news report on a woman who participated in the Rising.** Research the topic by listening to 2-3 excerpts from the Bureau of Military History's archive of witness statements, selecting statements which discuss either an individual or the role played by women more generally. Students will record a brief piece speaking about the role of the individual selected. The recording will be at least 1 minute long. .

### PLAN

**Information will be sourced from the internet and used to help write a script.**

- Students will be supplied with search terms by the teacher and source appropriate images, videos, and news articles from the internet – ask students to consider the reliability and objectivity of the information they find.
- Students will identify and select information to use and save it appropriately in a dedicated folder with a meaningful filename (this may be images or quotes that helped them to write their script).
- Students will keep an account of the sites they have visited in a saved document.

### DO

**Students will use the record function to record their script and use the various editing tools to edit their recording (e.g. selection tool, time shift tool, trim, silence, etc...). When the recording has been edited, the pair will complete the audio file by exporting it in a suitable file format (WAV / MP3).**

- Encourage students to consider the feelings of the broadcaster involved and the validity of the information communicated in the broadcast. Students may experiment with sound effects but students must consider whether these effects are necessary and appropriate.
- Remind students to save their work in a dedicated folder with an appropriate filename.

### REVIEW

**Give students the opportunity to view each other's work. This may be done by playing back the best work or students may circulate the room.**

Taking other students' feedback into account, ask students to justify their choices and decisions, including any difficulties they encountered in the creation of their audio file. This may be completed in the form of a saved document.



# DIGITAL TASKS

## FILM MAKING TASK



### TASK DESCRIPTION

*Students will create a short, silent, documentary film about the women who participated in the Easter Rising. The movie will be at least 30 seconds and use titles to convey information.* Students will research images (and if possible video) and information from the internet which will be used in their movies .

### PLAN

*Information will be sourced from the internet and designed in the form of a storyboard.*

- Students will be supplied with search terms by the teacher and source appropriate images, videos, audio and information from the internet – ask students to consider the reliability and objectivity of the information they find.
- Students will identify and select information to use and save it appropriately in a dedicated folder with a meaningful filename (this may be images or quotes that helped them to write their script).
- Students will keep an account of the sites they have visited in a saved document.
- Students will use the information and media they have sourced and construct a storyboard for the making of their movie.

### DO

*Students will import the various media items they sourced from the internet. Using their storyboards as a guide, students will construct their movie using various editing tools (Splitting, Trimming, Transitions, Effects and Captions/ Titles). Students will complete their piece of work by exporting it in a suitable file format (e.g. WMV/MP4).*

- Encourage students to consider the size and style of fonts, the size of images, the effects/transitions used and the tools available to them within the software package.
- Remind students to save their work in a dedicated folder with an appropriate filename.

### REVIEW

*Give students the opportunity to view each other's work. This may be done by viewing selected pieces of work or students may circulate the room.*

Taking other students' feedback into account, ask students to justify their choices and decisions, including any difficulties they encountered in the creation of their movie file. This may be completed in the form of a saved document.



# DIGITAL TASKS

## IMAGE EDITING TASK



### TASK DESCRIPTION

**Students will create an A4 poster aimed at encouraging universal suffrage.** Students will research existing universal suffrage posters from the time. Source at least 1 image from the internet and use the text tool to create a slogan. The poster should be created in a style similar to the archival examples.

### PLAN

**Images and information will be sourced from the internet and designed in the form of a sketch.**

- Students will be supplied with search terms by the teacher and source appropriate images and text from the internet – ask students to consider the reliability and objectivity of the information they find. Advise students that it is best to try and source medium/large images.
- Students will identify and select images/text to use and save them appropriately in a dedicated folder with a meaningful filename.
- Students will keep an account of the sites they have visited in a saved document.

### DO

**Students will import their sourced image into the software and use the colour/filter tools to add an effect to the image. Some students may use these tools in conjunction with the selection tools to highlight areas of the image. Students will then insert the quote/information they sourced by using the text tool. Students will complete their piece of work by exporting it in a suitable file format (e.g. JPEG).**

- Encourage students to consider the size and style of fonts, the colour/filter style and the tools available to them within the software package.
- Remind students to save their work in a dedicated folder with an appropriate filename.

### REVIEW

**Give students the opportunity to view each other's work. This may be done by displaying the best work on the whiteboard or students may circulate the room.**

Taking other students' feedback into account, ask students to justify their choices and decisions, including any difficulties they encountered in the creation of their image. This may be completed in the form of a saved document.

