

13.2 Chronology of Irish History (1155 – 1845 AD)

Instructions: Some events reverberate through time with consequences for the future. Examine the chronology of Ireland between 1155 when the Pope Adrian IV granted sovereignty over Ireland to the English King and 1845 and the start of the Potato Blight. Select three events that you believe had the greatest consequences and explain why.

1155. Pope Adrian IV grants King Henry II of England authority over Ireland.

1169. Normans from England invade and conquer Ireland. Introduce English common law. Invaders adopt Irish language and customs.

1366. Under the Statutes of Kilkenny, the English crown outlaws marriage and cultural exchange between Irish and Anglo-Normans.

1494. Start of mercantilist laws. Irish can only export industrial products through English ports.

1534. Henry VIII breaks with the Roman Catholic Church and founds Church of England. Ireland remains Catholic.

1541. Henry VIII declared King of both England and Ireland.

1550-1557. Irish resist English imposition of “plantation system” with British landlords and Irish tenant farmers.

1584. England seizes lands of Irish nobility who challenge crown’s authority.

c. 1588. Potato cultivation introduced into Ireland.

1601. At the Battle of Kinsale, England defeats Irish forces. Establishes a strong central government based in Dublin. Introduces colonization of Ulster by Scottish Presbyterian settlers.

1641. Irish rebel against English rule and landlords.

1649. Oliver Cromwell conquers Ireland and massacres Catholics. Irish owned lands are confiscated and given to Protestant colonists.

1660s. Irish accuse the British Governor of Galway of kidnapping people and selling them as indentured servants in the West Indies.

1663. Ireland can only ship goods on British-made and manned ships.

1690. Irish Catholics support James II over William III as King of England. James’ followers are defeated at the Battle of the Boyne. Many are exiled. More Irish Catholics lose their land.

1695. Penal Laws bar Catholics from owning guns, pistols or swords. Catholics are forbidden to receive an education, enter a profession, practice their religion, hold public office, purchase or lease land, or vote.

1720s. Grain crop failures increase Irish dependence on potatoes.

1739-1741. Failure of the potato crop. An estimated 10 percent of the population of Ireland dies. 1741 is known as *Bliadhain an áir* (Year of the Slaughter).

1750-1815. A long period of agricultural and population growth stimulated by trade with British colonies in North America and the Napoleonic Wars.

1794-1798. United Irishman ally with revolutionary France to challenge British rule in Ireland. Radical leaders are executed or exiled.

1801. Act of Union abolishes independent Irish (Protestant) Parliament. The administration of Ireland comes under the direct authority of the British Parliament.

1800-1845. The population of Ireland increases from approximately five million in 1800 to seven million in 1821 to eight and a half million in 1845.

1815. Corn Laws place heavy taxes on grain imported into Great Britain. Irish grain could be sent to England without paying the tax. Foreign grain imported to Ireland was taxed.

1823-1847. Daniel O’Connell, leader of the Catholic Association, leads mass protests demanding the emancipation of Ireland. O’Connell dies in 1847.

1836. A royal commission reports that there are 2.4 million Irish living in poverty.

1838. The Poor Law divides Ireland into 130 districts with work houses designed for 100,000 destitute people. The act discourages “pauperism” by enforcing a harsh regime of work, diet, and segregation by age and sex.

Workhouses are hated by the Irish and are rarely half full.

1845. Potato Blight destroys Irish potato crop four times in the next five years leading to mass hunger, starvation, evictions, and emigration. By 1851, the population has declined by nearly 20%. The period is known in Ireland as *Gorta Mór*, the Great Hunger.