

climb The Liberty Tree

**AN EXPLORATION OF THE
ULSTER-SCOTS' ROLE IN
THE UNITED IRISHMEN'S
REBELLION OF 1798**



PUPIL WORKBOOK 1





So What's Fair?

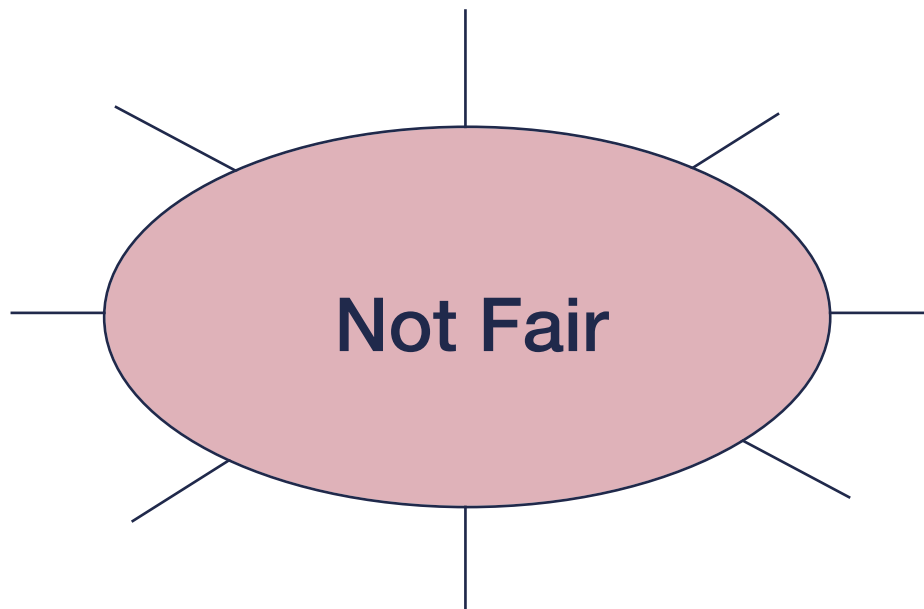
**The Penal Laws
and their Effects**

Have you ever complained

“That’s not fair!” ?

What sort of things make you say that?

Show some of them on the diagram below.



School Tuck Shop

Your teacher has given you a card:

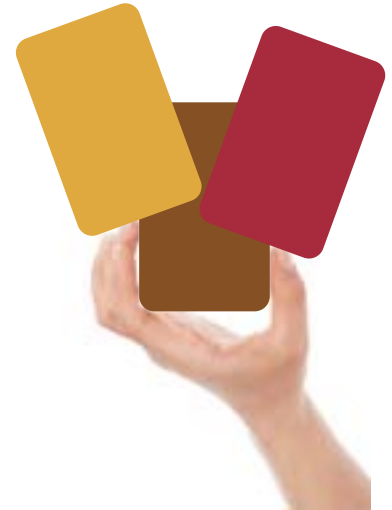
brown



yellow



red



Think how you would feel if there was a new school rule that said:

People with **brown** cards may use the Tuck Shop every day.

People with **yellow** cards may use the Tuck Shop on Wednesdays only.

People with **red** cards may not use the Tuck Shop at all.



Get into a group with 4 or 5 students whose cards are the same colour as yours.

Decide — what you think of the new rule.

Vote — on whether you want to keep the rule or not.

Keep rule	
Bin rule	

Next, working in a pair with someone else from your group, design and create a poster to get support for your view of the new rule.

Working on your own, write a letter to your school principal.

Ask for the new school rule to be kept or changed, depending on your opinion.

Remember to be polite and to explain your reasons carefully.

Let your partner check your work once it's finished.

Correct and hand in your work.



Enlightenment

Today we expect things to be fair, but if we could travel back in time we would soon discover that life was not always like this. People often had very little choice about who was in government. Laws passed were often unjust and cruel.

In the 18th century a number of deep thinkers called philosophers started to explain that if people were free, happy and treated fairly they would behave well. One of these thinkers was Francis Hutcheson, an Ulster-Scot from Saintfield in County Down who became a Professor at Glasgow University.



Glasgow University

Around the world people who were feeling unhappy about the way their governments treated them started to demand changes.



America

In 1776 the Americans declared their independence and went to war with Britain. They felt it was wrong that the British Parliament should pass laws they had to obey, particularly about taxes. They wanted to do it for themselves.



France

In 1789 the French people staged a revolution to get rid of their King. They wanted a Republic in which ordinary people had more say in the laws that were made. They resented the cruel treatment they often received from aristocrats: people who were important just because they had been born into old and wealthy families.



Ireland

In the 18th century Ireland had its own Parliament in Dublin, but the English Parliament had to approve all the laws that it passed.

The Irish Parliament was not *Democratic*:

It did not represent *Catholics* who were the majority population in Ireland.

It did not reflect the opinions of *Dissenters*, most of whom were Ulster-Scots Presbyterians.

Most Presbyterians lived in Antrim or Down, though Ulster-Scots in the Glens of Antrim were usually Catholic.



The Penal Laws in Ireland

Find out:

- what the Penal Laws and the Test Acts were
- how they restricted Dissenters
- how they affected Catholics
- which people were unaffected

Try these web sites for information:

www.dublincastle.ie/history9.html

www.hoganstand.com/general/identity/penal.html

www.bbc.co.uk/history/timelines/ni/penal_laws

www.folkpark.com/collections/ireland



The Penal Laws

Catholics:

Dissenters:

Which people in Ireland were not affected by the Penal Laws?

Role Play

1. Imagine you lived in Ireland at the time of the Penal Laws.
2. Get into groups of 5 or 6.
3. Some of you are Catholics, some are Presbyterians — draw lots to decide.
4. Talk about the Penal Laws, how they affect you, how you feel.
5. Discuss what you might do to try to change things.

Be prepared to perform your discussion for the class.



Ulster-Scots and the Penal Laws

Although the English Government began to relax the Penal Laws towards the end of the 18th century, they existed long enough to make many members of the Ulster-Scots community feel angry and excluded.



So what did they do?

- Some emigrated to America
- Some tried to be patient
- Some thought they should change the way Ireland was governed

But How ?

The Society of United Irishmen



William Drennan

This was partly the idea of Ulster-Scot **William Drennan**, the son of a Belfast Presbyterian minister.

Wolfe Tone led the Society in Dublin. Tone aimed to: unite all the people of Ireland and substitute the name of Irishmen for Protestant, Catholic or Dissenter.

The Society was first founded in Belfast in 1791. The members met in **Peggy Barclay's Tavern** in an entry off High Street.

The Society of United Irishmen

Aims

- To promote freedom and fairness.
- To end all discrimination against Catholics and Presbyterians.
- To reform Parliament so that it really represented all the Irish people.

Inspiration

- Many Ulster-Scots immigrants had fought in the American Revolution.
- The French had successfully rebelled against their King in 1789.

Ulster Membership

- Mainly Presbyterian
- Radical



They were guided by the ideas in the document below

The Rights Of Man

Every one has the right to:

- Liberty
- Property
- Security
- Resist Oppression

Sovereignty resides in the nation

A people has the right to decide its own destiny.

Tom Paine, 1791.



Here is a version of The Rights of Man which you may find easier to follow.

The Rights Of Man

Every one has the right to:

Be free

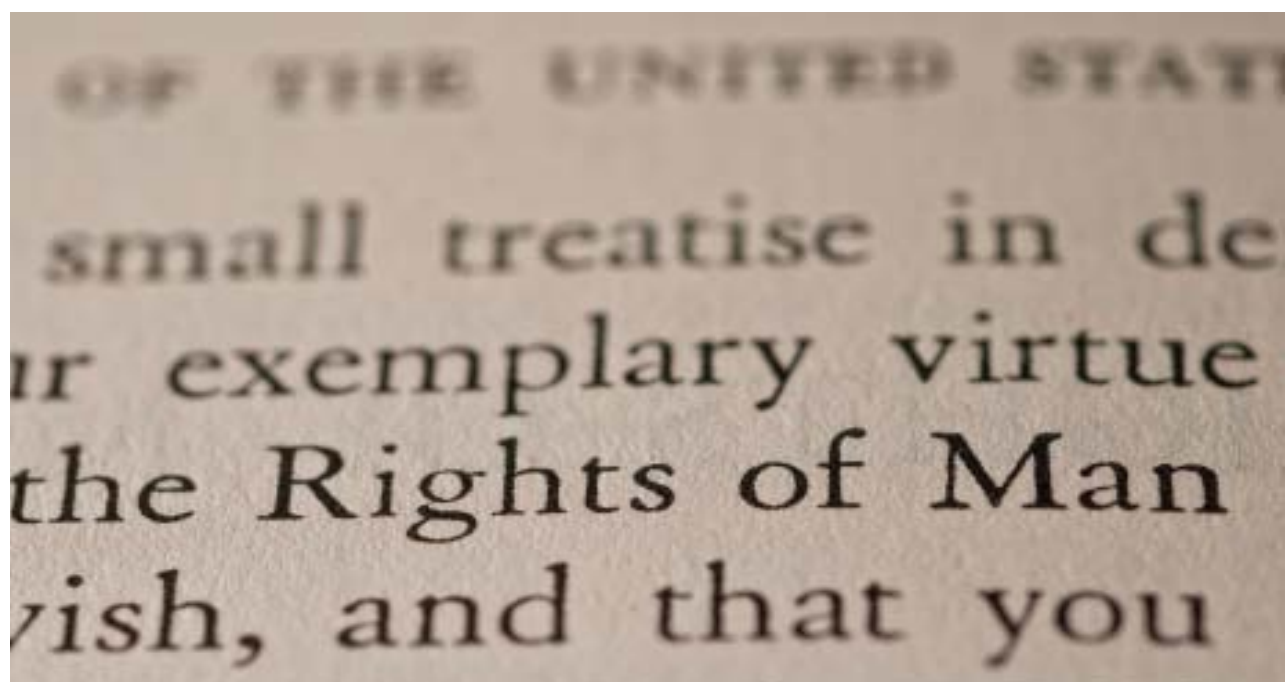
To own things

To be safe

To stand up to bullies

Everyone in the country should have the right to vote for the Government.

The Government should make laws for the good of all the people.



Get into groups of 5 or 6.



Talk about the following questions:

1. What do you think the word Radical means when used to describe somebody's politics?
2. What age groups would the Society have appealed to?
3. Should women have been allowed to join the Society?
4. Do you agree with Tom Paine's ideas about human rights? Would you add or change anything?
5. What's the difference between rights and responsibilities?

Using Publisher, make two posters:

One to list 5 rights you believe every teenager should have today.

One to list 5 responsibilities you believe every teenager should accept today.

Draft your work first and discuss it with your partner before finishing and printing it to hand in.



Leading United Irishmen in Belfast

Sam Neilson

William Simms

Robert Simms

Sam McTier

Henry Joy McCracken

Thomas Russell

Jemmy Hope



Henry Joy McCracken

Russell, unlike the others, was a southerner and a member of the Church of Ireland.

He was a close friend of Wolfe Tone. He had been a soldier, but he became a librarian in Belfast.

More Branches on the Tree



How did the United Irishmen spread their ideas?

1. In taverns (pubs).
2. In reading clubs and libraries.
3. By growing in numbers and dividing into new societies.
4. Through The Northern Star, their newspaper.
5. By establishing contact with a Catholic secret society:
The Defenders.

Spreading the Word



Can you fill in and memorise the methods the United Irishmen used to develop their network



Spreading Branches



The Societies were **Democratic**. Members took decisions by voting.

Once a Society grew to 35 members a new group formed, often under cover, as their ideas were not popular with the Government.

Organisations that provided cover included:

- Masonic Lodges
- Presbyterian congregations
- Volunteer units.

The Volunteers were military units formed earlier in the 18th century to defend Ireland against a feared French invasion.

It took from 1791 to 1798 for the United Irishmen to fulfill their aim of challenging the Government in an open revolt.

To understand the series of events that led to the Rebellion you will have to:-



Play the Liberty Game!

The Liberty Game

The events listed on the next page are out of order.

Your teacher has given you a set of cards.

Each card records one of these events.

Working with your partner, sort them into correct sequence. Start with the earliest event.



The Liberty Game

Government relaxes
Discrimination against
Catholics

June 9th, 1798, Rebellion
in Co. Down, led by
Henry Munro

United Irishmen declared
illegal in 1794

May 1798—Rebellion
In Wexford.

1791— United Irishmen's
Society founded
In Belfast

1795—the Cave Hill Oath.
Leaders, including Tone,
Russell and McCracken
swore never to give in until
they had achieved Ireland's
independence

Martial law imposed in
1797. William Orr, a
Presbyterian hanged.

June 7th, 1798—
Rebellion in Antrim, led
by McCracken

Government sets up Militia
to help keep the peace.
Many Catholics join

Dec. 1796—Tone's
French fleet fails to
land at Bantry

1796-97. Many leaders
of the movement
imprisoned in Dublin

1793—Britain at war with
French. United Irishmen
seek French help in their
own revolution

1. Do you think the United Irishmen deserved to be successful - look again at their aims and at the Rights of Man document?
2. Look again at the details of their organisation and at the Government's response to them up to the outbreak of Rebellion. Estimate their chances of being successful.
3. In order to be successful, what would they need?—list as many things as you can think of.

Work in groups of 5 or 6 and report your findings to the class.



Who wants to be A United Irishman?



Look back over this booklet at all the information you have on the United Irishmen.

Work with a partner and devise 12 questions to test knowledge and understanding about them among your classmates.

Use the format of the popular quiz show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* Provide 4 alternative answers for each question and allow opportunities to phone a friend or to go for 50/50.

Try to ensure that your questions cover the whole topic from beginning to end.

