

# A Learner's *Guide* to **Irish**\*

\*Donna Wong

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# Introduction

## The Author

The **Author** is the entity who composes, revises, and agonizes over the Book.

There are two aspects of the Author that it is useful to know:

- 1) experience of the subject of the Book;
- 2) motivation for devising the Book.

### I. Experience of Modern Irish

First of all, the Author is not one of the elect who acquire a new language effortlessly and unerringly. The Author is a native speaker of American English who had had no formal instruction in grammar, linguistics, or a Celtic language when she was introduced to Modern Irish. She spent five semesters studying Modern Irish at the University of California, Berkeley and at Harvard University, and spent time in the Irish-speaking areas of Ballyferriter and Carraroe. Her most valuable experience by far was three weeks of intensive tutoring by Séamas 'An Buach' Ó Cualáin and Mícheál 'An tIascaire' Mac Con Iomaire, two superb Irish teachers who are also native speakers from Conamara (see also *Acknowledgements*).

What the Author did not learn from instructors, she learned by attending reading groups, working through texts, conversing with more advanced speakers, and grappling with grammar until the fascination of what was difficult resolved into the elation of what made sense.

### II. Motivation for Writing a Modern Irish Textbook

In 1999 the Author was asked to teach second-year Irish at Boston College and began searching for a suitable textbook. Her own instructors had assigned *Irish for Everyone*, *Buntús Cainte 1*, *Learning Irish*, *New Irish Grammar*, and *Progress in Irish*, and she had later acquired *Beart agus Briathar*, *Buntús Cainte 2-3*, and *Cogar!* But the books that teach through dialogue do not explain grammar, the books that explain grammar offer too few examples, and the books that abound in examples assume familiarity with the language, the grammar, and/or linguistics. As a result, the Author had to concoct dozens of grammar handouts and exercises to fill in the gaps for her students. By the end of the year she had written 65% of the textbook she wished were available and resolved to write the remaining 35%. As the Author revised and expanded her handouts, she tested many of them in her first- and second-year Irish classes at Boston College and the Harvard Extension and Summer Schools. She also appealed to other Irish teachers for feedback on specific sections. The result is the Book.

## The Book

The **Book** is the version of the work that exists when the Author despairs of perfecting it.

There are four aspects of the Book that it is useful to know:

- 1) intended audience;
- 2) organization and conventions;
- 3) recommended use;
- 4) limitations of liability.

### I. Intended Audience

The Author wrote the Book from the perspective of an English-speaking learner of Irish, as an aid to other English-speaking learners of Irish, regardless of age, occupation, nationality, and motive. Her students have been undergraduates, graduates, professionals, retirees, people who have studied many languages, and people who have studied none. They have been as young as ten and old enough to have adult grandchildren. All that is required is a steadfast desire to learn Modern Irish and a willingness to invest the necessary time and effort.

The Book assumes no prior knowledge of Modern Irish and minimal knowledge of English grammar, so it will serve beginners ranging from those who have no experience of the Irish language and/or English grammar, to those who have an elementary grounding in both areas. Intermediate learners and instructors may use it as a reference tool and as a collection of alternatives to traditional categories and exercises.

### II. Organization and Conventions

The Book is divided into sections and subsections, depending on the complexity of each topic. For example, the section *Lookalikes* has no subsections because it is simply a field guide to common little words. In contrast, the section *Adjectives* has numerous subsections that discuss aspects such as *Predicative vs. Attributive*, *Plurals*, *Mutations*, and *First Declension*.

**Where subsections exist, their order of presentation is from simplest to most complicated.** That is, the material in the first subsection prepares you to understand the second, third, and ensuing subsections, and the more you know, the more subsections you can skip. It is recommended that you skim all of the subsections on your first reading to confirm that you are familiar with grammatical terms as they are used in the Book.

**A reference to a section indicates that *every one* of its subsections is relevant**, e.g. '*Tools*' encompasses all subsections of the section *Tools*.

**A reference to a specific subsection indicates that it *alone* is immediately relevant**, e.g. '*Tools: The Ó Dónaill Dictionary*' points to only one of the subsections of the section *Tools*.

References to more than one subsection under the same section heading are separated by a tilde, ‘~’, e.g. ‘Adjectives: Plurals~Mutations’ recommends two of the subsections of the section *Adjectives*.

Finally, the Author has boldfaced key phrases and terms. She has also underlined corresponding phrases in Irish and in translation, letters of a noun that change from case to case, mutations, and other important features.

### III. Recommended Use

The Book will be most useful when used in conjunction with a class or a textbook that omits grammatical explanations. Read through the entire *Table of Contents* to get an idea of what is available. Then, as you work through the course, read the sections and subsections that address your current questions.

That said, **every beginner should read *Tools*, which explains how to use the three most useful Modern Irish dictionaries.** Never assume that the layout, abbreviations, etc. of other language dictionaries are the same as those of English dictionaries. The English language is devoid of several features, foremost noun genders, that are vital in languages such as Irish.

### IV. Limitations of Liability

While the Author has made every effort to explain idioms and grammar points, she has not found a clear reason for every rule. Although she did not learn everything she needs to know in life from *Star Wars*, she does occasionally echo the warning of Jedi Master Yoda: ‘There is only *do* or *do not*. There is no *why*.’

## Acknowledgements

Both the Author and the Book have been shaped by the fellow-teachers and fellow-learners with whom she has pondered, conversed, and commiserated. All of you are somewhere in the Book, and many of the examples are tributes to particular individuals, most of whom will be allowed to confess or deny their share of credit, blame, gratitude, and affection.

Others will have no choice in the matter.

*Chomh fada is atá faocho ar an trá agus réaltaí sa spéir, beidh an tÚdar an-bhuíoch de Mhícheál ‘An tIascaire’ Mac Con Iomaire agus de Shéamas ‘Buach’ Ó Cualáin, rogha agus togha fear. D’fhág siad í in ann friotal a chur ar a cuid smaointe, d’fhoilsigh siad na díochlaontaí di, agus roinn siad saibhreas na teanga go flaithiúil léi. Míle buíochas, a chairde, agus Gaillimh abú!*

For humor, friendship, and wisdom, the Author praises Dr. Barbara Hillers, Dr. Kathryn Chadbourne, and Dr. Margo Griffin-Wilson, who have shared with her their experiences of learning Irish, teaching Irish, and surviving the hellish ordeal that ends in death or a dissertation.

For their interest in the language and their accommodation of her innovative teaching style, the Author lavishes heartfelt thanks on her past, present, future, conditional, imperfect, imperative, subjunctive, and autonomous students, for whom the Book was written.

# Conventions

## Caighdeán Spelling

The spelling of Irish used to reflect its pronunciation by whoever was writing it, with the result that the same word might be spelled several different ways, preserving the features of each writer's dialect. A simplified spelling system was devised and published in 1947 as *Litriú na Gaeilge: Lámhleabhar an Chaighdeáin Oifigiúil* 'The Spelling of Irish: A Handbook of the Official Standard'.<sup>1</sup>

The old spelling is used in the Dinneen Dictionary and in texts composed up to approximately 1940. *Caighdeán* spelling is used in the Ó Dónaill Dictionary and in nearly all texts composed from 1960 onwards. Examples of the differences are given below.

	Old (Dinneen)	Caighdeán (Ó Dónaill)
-ighim ⇒ -ím	léirighim 'explain'	léirím
-ughadh ⇒ -ú	ceartughadh 'correction'	ceartú
-aidheacht ⇒ -aíocht	falchaidheacht 'grimness'	falchaíocht
-aidhe ⇒ -aí	amhránaidhe 'singer'	amhránaí
-eamhail ⇒ -iúil	suimeamhail 'interesting'	suimiúil
-ighim ⇒ -im	léighim 'I read'	léim
-idhe ⇒ -í	croidhe 'heart'	croí
-adha- ⇒ -ú-	bunadhas 'origin'	bunús
-aedhea- ⇒ -ae-	Gaedhealach 'Irish'	Gaelach
-aogha- ⇒ -ao-	saoghal 'life'	saol

## Length-Marks

In *Caighdeán* spelling, a **Length-Mark** (´) is *not* written above a long vowel that occurs in the following combinations:

á	-ard-, -aird-	garda 'policeman', cairde 'friends'
	-arl-, -airl-	tharla 'happened', comhairle 'advice'
	-arn-, -airn-	bearna 'gap', tairne 'nail'
	-arr-, -airr-	barr 'top', tairr 'stomachs'
é	-eird-	ceird 'craft, trade'
	-eirl-	eirleach 'carnage'
ó	-ord-, -oir-	bord 'table', oirdéal 'ordeal'
	-orl-, -oir-	orlach 'inch', coirleach 'strapwrack seaweed'
	-orn-, -oirn-	dorn 'fist', foirne 'teams'
	-omh-	chomh 'as'
	-eo-	ceo 'fog'
ú	-urd-, -uird-	sciurd 'hurry', sciuid 'a quick trip'
	-url-, -uirl-	urlár 'floor', tuirling 'descend'

-urn-, -uirn-    murnán 'ankle', muirín 'sweetheart'  
 -umh-            cumhacht 'power'

## The Gaelic Typeface

The **Gaelic Typeface** was created in the 1570s and the letters were based on the half-uncial script written in early Irish manuscripts.<sup>2</sup> Most of the alphabet is easy to recognize, but 'd', 'g', 'r', and 's' differ significantly from their counterparts in Roman Typeface.

Gaelic Typeface	Δ	ᵇ	ᶜ	ᵈ	ᵉ	ᶑ	ᶓ	ᵐ	ᵏ
Roman Typeface	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
Gaelic Typeface	ᶞ	ᵐ	ᵎ	ᵋ	ᵑ	ᵒ	ᵒ	ᵒ	ᵒ
Roman Typeface	l	m	n	o	p	r	s	t	u

Whereas *Caighdeán* spelling places 'h' after a lenited consonant, the Gaelic Typeface places a Punctum '·' above the lenited consonant:

Gaelic Punctum	ᵇ	ᶜ	ᵈ	ᶑ	ᶓ	ᵐ	ᵏ	ᵒ	ᵒ
<i>Caighdeán</i> Spelling	bh	ch	dh	fh	gh	mh	ph	sh	th

## Grammatical Terms, Irish–English

Keep this list handy if you learned grammatical terms in Irish or need to consult a grammar in Irish.

**aidiacht** ♀ 'adjective'

- a. **aitreabúideach** 'attributive adjective'
- a. **cháilíochta** 'attributive adjective'
- a. **fhaisnéiseach** 'predicative adjective'
- a. **shealbhach** 'possessive adjective'
- a. **thaispeántach** 'demonstrative adjective'

**aimsir** ♀ 'verb tense'

- a. **chaite** 'past tense'
- a. **fháistineach** 'future tense'
- a. **ghnáthchaite** 'imperfect/past habitual'
- a. **ghnáthláithreach** 'present habitual'
- a. **láithreach** 'present tense'
- a. **neamhfoirfe** 'imperfect'

**ainm, ainmfhocal** 'noun; substantive'

- a. **briathartha** 'verbal noun'
- a. **cinnte** 'definite noun'
- a. **coiteann** 'common noun'
- a. **dílis** 'proper noun'
- a. **éiginnte** 'indefinite noun'
- a. **teibí** 'abstract noun'

**ainmní** ‘subject’

**alt** ‘definite article’

**ar lár** ‘omitted, left out’

**ar lorg** ‘following’

**baininscneach** ‘feminine’

**briathar** ‘verb’

**b. aistreach** ‘transitive verb’

**b. rialta** ‘regular verb’

**b. neamhaistreach** ‘intransitive verb’

**b. neamhrialta** ‘irregular verb’

**b. saor** ‘autonomous verb-form’

**caol** ‘slender’

**ceannfhocal** ‘headword’

**céim** ♀ ‘degree’

**breischéim** ♀ ‘comparative degree’

**bunchéim** ♀ ‘positive degree’

**c. chomparáide** ♀ ‘comparative degree’

**c. chothroim** ♀ ‘equative degree’

**sárchéim** ♀ ‘superlative degree’

**claoninsint** ♀ ‘indirect speech’

**clásal** ‘clause’

**fochlásal** ‘dependent/subordinate clause’

**príomhchlásal** ‘main clause’

**cnuasainm, cnuas-ainmfhocal** ‘collective noun’

**coibhneasta** ‘relative’

**coimrithe** ‘syncopated’

**comhfhocal** ‘compound word’

**cónasc** ‘conjunction’

**consan** ‘consonant’

**cuspóir** ‘object’

**dearfach** ‘affirmative’

**díochlaonadh** ‘declension’

**diúltach** ‘negative’

**dobhriathar** ‘adverb’

**faí** ♀ ‘voice’

**f. chéasta** ♀ ‘passive voice’

**f. ghníomhach** ♀ ‘active voice’

**firinscneach** ‘masculine’

**fleiscín** ‘hyphen’

**foirceann** ‘affix’

**foirm** ♀ ‘form’

**f. cheangailte** ♀ ‘synthetic form’

**f. ghafa** ♀ ‘synthetic form’

**f. scartha** ♀ ‘analytic form’

**f. tháite** ♀ ‘synthetic form’

**f. threise** ♀ ‘emphatic form’

**forainm** ‘pronoun’

**f. ceisteach** ‘interrogative pronoun’

**f. coibhneasta** ‘relative pronoun’

**f. éiginnte** ‘indefinite pronoun’

**f. pearsanta** ‘personal pronoun’

**f. réamhfhoclach** ‘prepositional pronoun/conjugated preposition’

**f. taispeántach** ‘demonstrative pronoun’

**frása** ‘phrase’

**fréamh** ‘root’

**guta** ‘vowel’

**g. cúnta** ‘epenthetic vowel’

**i lár focail** ‘in the middle of a word’

**iarmhír** ♀ ‘suffix’

**infhilleadh** ‘inflection’

**insint** ♀ ‘speech’

**claoninsint** ♀ ‘indirect speech/quotation’

**insint dhíreach** ♀ ‘direct speech/ quotation’

**insint neamhdhíreach** ♀ ‘indirect speech/quotation’

**iolra** ‘plural’

**lagiolra** ‘weak plural’

**tréaniolra** ‘strong plural’

**leathan** ‘broad’

**modh** ‘mood’

**m. coinníollach** ‘conditional mood’

**m. foshuiteach** ‘subjunctive mood’

**m. ordaitheach** ‘imperative mood’

**m. táscach** ‘indicative mood’

**neamhaistreach** ‘intransitive’

**neamhspleách** ‘independent’



**pearsa** ♀ ‘person’  
**réamhfhocal** ‘preposition’  
**réamhtheachtaí** ‘antecedent’  
**réimír** ‘prefix’  
**réimniú** ‘conjugation’  
**séimhiú** ‘lenition’  
**síneadh fada** ‘length-mark’  
**siolla** ‘syllable’  
     **aonsiollach** ‘monosyllabic’  
     **ilsiollach** ‘polysyllabic’  
**spleách** ‘dependent’  
**srónaíl** ♀ ‘nasalization’  
**tuisseal** ‘[noun] case’  
     **t. ainmneach** ‘nominative case’  
     **t. cuspóireach** ‘accusative case’  
     **t. gairmeach** ‘vocative case’  
     **t. ginideach** ‘genitive case’  
     **t. tabharthach** ‘dative case’  
**túsfhocal** ‘first word in a compound word’  
**uaschamóg** ♀ ‘apostrophe’  
**uatha** ‘singular’  
**urú** ‘eclipsis’

## Symbols, Abbreviations, and Terms in This Book

♂ = ‘this word is masculine’  
 ♀ = ‘this word is feminine’  
 E = ‘Eclipses a following word’  
 L = ‘Lenites a following word’  
 h = ‘prefixes ‘h’ to a following word with an initial vowel’  
 t̄ = ‘prefixes ‘t’ to a following word with an initial vowel and some words with initial ‘s + l, n, r’  
 N/A = ‘Nominative/Accusative form of the noun’  
 n.d. = no date  
 sg. = ‘singular’  
 pl. = ‘plural’  
 p. = ‘person’, referring to a conjugated verb-form  
 [ ] = ‘literal translation’  
 “ = ‘idiomatic translation’  
*italics in English translation* = ‘emphasis in Irish word/s’  
~~word with strikethrough~~ = ‘this form does not exist but has been created to illustrate a point’  
 ~ = ‘these subsections are found in the same section’  
 ⓘ = ‘information about the traditional or literary sources used in the preceding examples’  
**Caighdeán** = ‘official standard Irish’  
**broad vowel** = ‘a, o, or u’  
**broad consonant** = ‘a consonant immediately followed and/or preceded by a, o, or u’  
**broaden** = ‘make broad by deleting a slender vowel or inserting a broad vowel’  
**slender vowel** = ‘e or i’  
**slender consonant** = ‘a consonant immediately followed and/or preceded by e or i’  
**slenderize / attenuate** = ‘make slender by inserting a slender vowel’  
**syncope** = ‘deletion of all short vowels in the final syllable of a word’  
**initial** = ‘at the beginning of a word’  
**internal** = ‘in the middle of a word’  
**final** = ‘at the end of a word’  
**prefix** = ‘a letter, letters, or syllable that can be added to or removed from the beginning of a word’

**suffix / ending** = ‘a letter, letters, or syllable that can be added to or removed from the end of a word’

**consonant cluster** = ‘a group of consonants pronounced together’, e.g. three, describe, sent

**monosyllabic** = ‘consists of one syllable’

**polysyllabic** = ‘consists of more than one syllable’

**dual** = ‘denotes two of something’

**qualify** = ‘describe’, e.g. in ‘purple flower’, ‘purple’ qualifies or describes ‘flower’

**govern** = ‘determines the case of a following noun or the mood of a following verb’

Gantz, Jeffery 1984. ed. and trans., *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, New York, Penguin

### EDITOR’S NOTE

The publishers have retained the US spelling conventions used here by the author as this book is directed at the international Irish market, mainly in the USA.

# Tools

## The Ó Dónaill Dictionary

Full citation: *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla*, ed. Niall Ó Dónaill (1977; Baile Átha Cliath/Dublin: An Gúm).

Description: This is the largest Modern-Irish dictionary in print and it is essential for serious study of Irish. Headwords (i.e. the words being defined) in Irish are followed by definitions, abbreviations, and grammatical terms in English, and all examples of usage in idiomatic Irish are translated into idiomatic English. Ó Dónaill uses a Roman typeface and *Caighdeán* spelling, which has been generally adopted as the standard for written Irish. Being a realist, however, he also includes common variant spellings and cross-references them with his headwords. There is a generous amount of jargon from the sciences, academia, and various professions, but most items in Ó Dónaill occur in twentieth-century conversation and literature. His is very much a ‘popular’ work, helpful in speaking, reading, and writing Irish, regardless of the user’s level of knowledge.

Uses: Ó Dónaill can answer 95% of the questions that arise in the everyday speaking of Irish and the reading of contemporary Irish literature. If you are interested in a certain dialect, and/or in texts composed earlier than about 1940, you will have to resort to more specialized Tools. Localized words that have fallen out of use may be found only in word-lists that cover a particular time or place (see *Tools: Additional*). Likewise, terms that are highly technical and/or in recently-developed fields (e.g. computer terminology) must be sought in specialist terminological dictionaries. **Be warned that Ó Dónaill’s dictionary does not include all the words in Dinneen’s dictionary** (see *Tools: Dinneen’s Dictionary*).

Bonuses: Ó Dónaill has separate entries for idioms of ‘Verb + Simple Preposition’, meaning that a headword such as the very versatile verb *cuir* ‘put’ is followed by a whole series of supplemental headwords such as *cuir ar*, *cuir de*, *cuir le*, etc. This allows a reader to ‘shortcut’ to a common combination of ‘Verb + Simple Preposition’ instead of laboriously scanning a single, pages-long entry for ‘*cuir* + any-other-word-often-used-with-*cuir*’. Another windfall is the number after the ‘a’ in the entries of regular adjectives. That number is the adjective’s declension, and if this news does not have you on your feet and cheering, see *Adjectives: Declensions*.

Obstacles: Ó Dónaill explains his editorial decisions, conventions, and symbols in the introduction, but since the introduction is untranslated, key information is inaccessible to beginners. Nor is the *Nodanna* section consistently enlightening. It *does not* contain all of the abbreviations that appear in the entries and a reader must be able to distinguish ‘chains’ of two or more abbreviations from one long abbreviation (e.g. *pr.n.* is *proper name*, one abbreviation, but *var. comp.* is *variant [and] comparative*, two abbreviations).

## Key Symbols:

~ = this form is identical to the headword (e.g. 'ní, *gs.* ~' = the genitive singular of ní is also ní.)

~ending = attach this ending to the headword (e.g. 'cloch, *pl.* ~a' = the plural of cloch is clocha.)

-ending = starting from the end of the word, look for the first letter or cluster of letters in the headword that matches the first letter or cluster of letters in the ending. Then delete from the headword the shared letter/s and everything after it and attach the ending (e.g. 'cathair, *gs.* ~thrach' = the genitive singular of cathair is cathrach; 'faobhar, *gs. & npl.* ~air' = the genitive singular and nominative plural of faobhar are both spelled faobhair.)

## Key Abbreviations:

*npl.* = nominative/accusative plural

*gpl.* = genitive plural

*ds.* = dative singular

*dpl.* = dative plural

*pl.* = strong plural (see *Nouns: Plurals*)

*s.* = substantive, i.e. a word that historically was a noun but no longer declines for all cases and numbers and is used only in specific idioms

*spl.* = substantive plural, i.e. a substantive that is used only in this plural form

*indecl.* = an indeclinable noun, i.e. a noun that is used only in the form given as the headword

*pp.* = past participle

*vn.* = verbal noun

*do* = 'yours' in the American English sense of 'a person's' or 'one's'

*sth.* = 'something', Ó Dónaill's translation of *rud* (see *Notes on Verbal Nouns*, below)

*s.o.* = 'someone', Ó Dónaill's translation of *duine* (see *Notes on Verbal Nouns*, below)

## Notes on Verbal Nouns:

If the headword is a verb and its verbal noun is not listed separately, the verbal noun is identical to the headword (e.g. 'díol<sup>2</sup>, *v.t. & i.* 1. Sell' = the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. imperative and the verbal noun are both díol).

Where English uses the infinitive to represent a verbal expression (e.g. 'to spend money'), Irish uses the verbal noun plus the preposition *a* (e.g. *airgead a chaitheamh*). When the verbal noun takes an object (e.g. *airgead* 'money'), the object is represented by *rud* 'thing' or *duine* 'person', both words having the same function as variables in algebra: they mark the position of the object in the idiom and are meant to be replaced with a particular thing or person. For example, to use the idiom *rud a dhearbú* 'to affirm sth.', replace *rud* with the thing to be affirmed, such as *breithiúnas* 'a judgement', yielding *breithiúnas a dhearbú* 'to affirm a judgement'. If you wish to specify a subject, tense and/or mood, simply conjugate the verb *dearbhaigh*, of which *dearbú* is the verbal noun: *dearbhaím a bhreithiúnas* 'I affirm his judgement', *dhearbhófai a bhreithiúnas* 'his judgement would be affirmed', etc.

## Commonest Formats:

**N/A singular of a noun, gender,** (genitive singular, dative singular if different from N/A singular, plural/s). 1. Primary sense of the word. (a) a related, usually more specific sense of the word, often in an idiom. (b) a different related, usually more specific sense of the word, often in an idiom. 2. A different, common sense of the word. (a) a related, usually more specific sense of the word, often in an idiom, etc.

**positive degree of an adjective,**<sup>3</sup> *a1* identifying it as a First-Declension Adjective or *a2* identifying it as a Second-Declension Adjective or *a3* identifying it as a Third-Declension Adjective (**any irregular forms of the adjective, such as the comparative/superlative or the genitive singular feminine**). Primary sense of the adjective. 1. A more specific sense of the adjective. (a) idiomatic uses of the adjective in this more specific sense, especially in idioms with particular nouns, etc.

**2<sup>nd</sup> singular imperative form of a verb, transitive and/or intransitive in nature**<sup>4</sup> (**any irregular forms of the verb, including the past participle and verbal noun, as well as conjugated forms**) 1. Primary sense of the verb. 1. Commonest specific sense of the verb. (a) examples of the verb used in this sense. (b) examples of the verb used in a related sense. 2. Another common specific sense of the verb. (a) examples of the verb used in this sense, etc.

## Explanations of Sample Entries:

**mioneolas, m.** (*gs.* -ais). Detailed knowledge; detailed information.

**mioneolas** is the N/A singular of a noun; the noun is masculine; its genitive singular is **mioneolais** and it has no plural; its primary meaning is 'detailed knowledge; detailed information'.

**cumann**, *m.* (*gs.* & *npl.* -ainn, *gpl.* ~)

**cumann** is the N/A singular of a noun; the noun is *masculine*; its *genitive singular* and *nominative plural* are **cumainn**; its *genitive plural* is also **cumann**.

**seoid**, *f.* (*gs.* ~e, *npl.* -oda, *gpl.* -od). 1 = SÉAD<sup>2</sup>

**seoid** is the N/A singular of a noun; the noun is *feminine*; its *genitive singular* is **seoide**; its *nominative plural* is **seoda**; its *genitive plural* is **seod**; a common variant spelling is SÉAD, there are at least two different headwords spelled like SÉAD, and the one that is the equivalent of **seoid** is the second one listed in the dictionary.

**gabháil**, *f.* (*gs.* -ála, *pl.* -álacha). 1. *vn.* of GABH. 2. (*a*) Catch, seizure, capture. ~ i ngreim, gripping. ~ dúin, capture of a fort.

**gabháil** is the N/A singular of a noun; the noun is *feminine*; its *genitive singular* is **gabhála**; its *plural* is **gabhálacha**; it is the verbal noun of GABH 'take', so its primary sense is 'taking'; its second-commonest sense is 'catch, seizure, capture'; **gabháil i ngreim** means 'gripping'; **gabháil dúin** means 'capture of a fort'.

**codach**, *var. gs.* of CUID

**codach** is a *variant genitive singular* of the noun CUID, so you should look up CUID for information on this word.

**séú**, *m.* (*gs.* ~, *pl.* séithe) & *a3*. Sixth. 1. *a.* (Prefixes **h** to vowel; in *gs.* either *nom.* or *gen.* of article and accompanying noun may be used) **An ~ bliain**, **huair**, the sixth year, time. **Cuid an t~ fear**, **an t~ fir**, the sixth man's share. . . 2. Sixth part. **Cúig shéú de rud**, five sixths of sth.

**séú** is the N/A singular of a noun; the noun is *masculine*; its *genitive singular* is **séú**; its *plural* is **séithe**; it can also function as a *Third-Declension Adjective*; its primary sense is 'sixth'; when used in its primary sense, it prefixes 'h' to a word with an initial vowel; when it is in the *genitive singular*, it may be preceded by either the *nominative* or the *genitive singular* of the definite article, and followed by either the *nominative* or the *genitive singular* of the noun it qualifies; **an séú bliain** means 'the sixth year', **an séú huair** means 'the sixth time'; **cuid an tséú fear** or **cuid an tséú fir** means 'the sixth man's share'; its second commonest sense is 'a sixth part' of something; **cúig shéú de rud** means 'five sixths of a thing', so to use this idiom you would simply substitute a specific noun for **rud**, e.g. **cúig shéú de chiste** 'five sixths of a cake'.

**liath**<sup>2</sup>, *a.* (*gsm.* léith, *gsf.* & *comp.* léithe, *npl.* ~a). Grey. 1. **Dath**, **imir**, ~, grey colour, tint. **Gruaig**, **ceann**, ~, grey hair, head.

**liath** is one of at least two headwords with identical spelling and different meanings; this one is the positive degree of an *adjective*, and it must be an irregular adjective because there is no number to indicate its declension; its *genitive singular* form when qualifying a *masculine* noun is **léith**; its *genitive singular* form when qualifying a *feminine* noun is **léithe**, and its *comparative* degree is also **léithe**;

its *N/A plural* form is **liatha**; its primary sense is 'gray'; when the color gray (as opposed to a particular gray object) is in question, the phrase is **dath liath** or **imir liath**; when gray hair is in question, the phrase is **gruaig liath** or **ceann liath**.

**mionchóir**, *s.* (In phrase) **Ar mhionchóir**, on a small scale.

**mionchóir** is a substantive that is used only as the indirect object in a particular idiomatic phrase **ar mhionchóir**, which means 'on a small scale'.

**mallaibh**, *spl.* (In phrase) **Ar na ~**, of late, lately.

**mallaibh** is a substantive *plural* that is used only as the indirect object in a particular idiomatic phrase **ar na mallaibh**, which means 'of late' or 'lately'.

**amárach**, *adv.* & *indecl. s.* & *a.* Tomorrow.

**amárach** is an *adverb*, and it can also be used as a substantive or as an *adjective*, but it cannot ever be *declined* for case, number, or gender; it means 'tomorrow'.

**fág**, *v.t.* & *i.* (*vn.* ~áil, *pp.* ~tha)

**fág** is the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. imperative of a verb; the verb can be *transitive* or *intransitive*; its verbal noun is **fágáil**; its *past participle* is **fágtha**.

**fág ag**, *v.t.* Leave to. **Rud a fhágáil ag duine**, to leave sth. to s.o.

**fág ag** is an idiomatic combination of 'verb + preposition', and in this usage the verb is always *transitive*; its primary sense is 'leave' something 'to' someone or something; **ag** indicates the *indirect* object, the someone or something who is receiving the *direct* object, here represented by **rud**, so that 'to leave a house to them' would be **teach a fhágáil acu** and 'a house will be left to us' would be **fágfar teach againn**.

**codail**, *v.i.* (*pres.* -dlaíonn, *vn.* -dladh, *pp.* -alta). Sleep. **Dul a chodladh**, to go to sleep. **Duine a chur a chodladh**, to put s.o. to sleep.

**codail** is the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. imperative of a verb; the verb is always *intransitive*; the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. singular *present* tense is **codlaíonn**; the verbal noun is **codladh**; the *past participle* is **codalta**; the primary sense of the verb is 'sleep'; the idiom **dul a chodladh** is equivalent to the English 'to go to sleep', so that 'we went to sleep' would be **chuamar a chodladh**; the idiom **duine a chur a chodladh** is equivalent to the English 'to put someone to sleep', so that 'would you put them to sleep?' would be **an gcuirfeá a chodladh iad?**

**feic**, *v.t.* & *i.* (*p.* chonaic, *dep.* faca; *p. aut.* chonacthas, *dep.* facthas; *vn.* ~eáil; *pp.* ~the). See. 1. **Rud a fheiceáil**, to see sth.

**feic** is the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. imperative of a verb; the verb can be *transitive* or *intransitive*; it has several irregular forms: the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. in the *past* tense is **chonaic**; the *dependent* 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. in the *past* tense is **faca**; the *past autonomous* is **chonacthas**; the *dependent past*



autonomous is **facthas**; the verbal noun is **feiceáil**; the past participle is **feicthe**; the primary sense of the verb is 'see'; its commonest usage is with an object, the **rud** of **rud a fheiceáil**, and 'to see a friend' would be *cara a fheiceáil* while 'don't you see your friend?' would be *nach bhfeiceann tú do chara?*

**íoc**, v.t. & i. (pp. -tha). 1. Pay (ar, as, for). **Bille, costais, a ~**, to pay a bill, costs. ~ **as earraí** to pay for goods. **Do chion a ~**, to pay, contribute one's share. *Tá na fiacha le h~, gan ~*, the debts are due, outstanding. **Cards: An bord a ~**, to put one's money on the table.

**íoc** is the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. imperative and the verbal noun of a verb; the verb can be transitive or intransitive; its past participle is **íoctha**; its primary sense is 'pay', with **ar** or **as** indicating what is being paid for; **bille a íoc** means 'to pay a bill' and **costais a íoc** means 'to pay costs'; **íoc as earraí** means 'to pay for goods', **do chion a íoc** [your share to pay] means idiomatically 'to pay one's share' or 'to contribute one's share', so that 'he paid his share' would be *d'íoc sé a chion*; *tá na fiacha le híoc* means 'the debts are due' and *tá na fiacha gan íoc* means 'the debts are outstanding'; in the context of a card game, **an bord a íoc** means 'to put one's money on the table', so that 'won't you put your money on the table?' would be *nach n-íocfaidh tú an bord?*

**feadair**, defective v. 3 sg. (1 sg. **feadar**, 2 sg. **feadraís**, 1 pl. **feadramar**). (Used only with negative or interrogative) Know, knew.

**feadair** is the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. of a defective verb; the only other forms of this verb are the 1<sup>st</sup> person singular **feadar**, the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular **feadraís**, and the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural **feadramar**; all forms of this verb are used only in a negative statement, a negative question, or an affirmative question; the verb's primary sense is 'know' or 'knew', the tense being revealed by context. *Ní fheadar cá raibh sé* could mean either 'I don't know where he was' or 'I didn't know where he was', whereas *ní fheadar cá raibh sé go bhfuair mé a litir* clearly means 'I didn't know where he was until I received his letter'.

## The Dinneen Dictionary

Full Citation: *Foclóir Gaedhilge agus Béarla* 'Irish-English Dictionary', ed. Rev. Patrick Dinneen, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1927; Dublin: Irish Texts Society, reprinted 1979).

Description: Dinneen was the largest and most comprehensive Modern Irish dictionary until the publication of Ó Dónaill in 1977, and in its second, expanded edition is still well worth owning. It differs from its successor visually and conceptually. All Irish words – headwords, idioms, examples of usage – are in Gaelic typeface (see *Conventions: The Gaelic Typeface*) while all English words – grammatical terms, abbreviations, translations – are in Roman typeface. A typical definition consists of a handful of terse English equivalents followed by a flood of Irish idioms that illustrate the widest possible range of meanings. Dinneen's desire to provide a vocabulary suitable for conversational, professional, and literary purposes explains his reliance on sources as diverse as contemporary speech and bardic poetry (ca. 1250-1650). His determination to include only 'genuine' Irish explains his adherence to the old spelling (see *Conventions: Caighdeán Spelling* and *Obstacles* below) and his exclusion of many innovations and loanwords that he considered awkward or unnecessary.<sup>5</sup> The result is an eclectic compendium of the colloquial and the archaic, fascinating in its illumination of the obscure and maddening in its omission of the ordinary.

Uses: If you are comfortable with the basics of Irish, have an appetite for dialects and idioms, or intend to work with literature composed earlier than about 1940, make Dinneen your constant companion. It excels in the explication of placenames, folktales, proverbs, and mystifying mutations. You may find cited as an example the very line of bardic poetry that you are attempting to translate, or the one idiomatic usage of a word that resolves the meaning of a baffling phrase. Particularly rich in literary usages and Munster dialects, Dinneen is the best single-volume guide to Early Modern Irish (1650-1900) and should always be consulted when a word or a peculiar usage cannot be found in Ó Dónaill.

Bonuses: The entries are preceded by helpful 'Aids to Pronunciation'. Each type of Irish vowel and consonant – broad, slender, long, short, diphthongs, and triphthongs – is described and its pronunciation illustrated with an Irish word and an English word. 'Aspirated Letters' (= Lenited Letters) and 'Eclipsed Letters' are presented in the same way. At the end of the book, 'Paradigms of the Irregular Verbs' gives full conjugations of the irregular verbs in their older, synthetic forms (see *Verbs: Analytic vs. Synthetic*), including independent and dependent forms that were not accepted into the *Caighdeán*, but are common in dialects.

Obstacles: First, the older spellings can drive you batty. Until you have memorized the 'letter conversions' (see *Conventions: Caighdeán Spelling*), keep a list of them tucked inside Dinneen's dictionary or else you may never find the word you are looking for. Second, just as excessive wealth can be an embarrassment of riches, Dinneen's excessive illustration can be an agony of idioms. His entries can leave you frustrated rather than enlightened, as you realize you have read an entire column of examples and

still do not know what the headword means.<sup>6</sup> Dinneen's dictionary is not for the faint-hearted, but it is an excellent way to measure progress because the more your Irish improves, the more useful you will find this book.

## Key Symbols:

'-ending' = starting from the *end* of the word, look for the first letter or cluster of letters in the headword that matches the first letter or cluster of letters in the **ending**. Then delete from the headword the shared letter/s and everything after it and attach the **ending** (e.g. 'CATHAIR, *gs.* -CATHAIRCH' = the genitive singular of **cathair** is **cathrach**; 'FAOBHAR, *gs.* & *npl.* -AIR' = the genitive singular and nominative plural of **faobhar** are both spelled **faobhair**.)

## Key Abbreviations:

**first letter of the headword.** = insert the headword, e.g. in the entry for CUIRIM, 'C. OIRT!' stands for 'CUIRIM OIRT!'

**id.** = *idem*, meaning 'the same as the form immediately preceding', e.g. 'CUIRIM, -AIR, *pl. id.*' means that CUIRIM has a weak plural, its nominative plural being the same as its genitive singular CUIRIS, and its genitive plural being the same as its nominative singular, CUIRIM.

**ib.** = *ibidem*, meaning 'in the same source as the one just cited'

**smt.** = *sometimes*, meaning 'this form is occasionally used'

**p.a.** = *participial adjective*, known in Ó Dónaill as the past participle

**vl.** = *verbal noun*

**imper.** = 2<sup>nd</sup> p. singular *imperative* form

**ad.** = *adverb*

**fig.** = *figuratively*

**al.** = *also*, meaning 'the following is an accepted variant'

**d.** = *dative*

**dim.** = *diminutive*, meaning 'a [literally or figuratively] small one of these'

**gnly.** = *generally*

**indec.** = *indeclinable*, meaning 'this word does not change to reflect case or number'

## Notes on Verbs:

The headword for a verb is the 1<sup>st</sup> p. sg. present synthetic form (see *Verbs: Analytic Forms vs. Synthetic Forms*), e.g. CUIRIM 'I put' instead of cuir 'put' as in Ó Dónaill.

The perfective particle *do-* (see *Preverbal Particles*) appears before *all* initial letters in the past, imperfect, and conditional forms of a verb, so Dinneen

sometimes has DO CUIR TÁ instead of *chuir tú*, DO CUIRFEÁ instead of *chuirfeá*, DO CUIRTEÁ instead of *chuirteá*, etc.

A different, non-perfective *do7* precedes some irregular verbs. For example, the entry for *feic* 'see' is listed under the earlier form DO-CÍM 'I see', which still occurs (usually without the *do*) in Munster and Donegal Irish. If you wish to consult the entry for an irregular verb, check Dinneen's 'Paradigms of the Irregular Verbs' for the spelling of the headword.

## Notes on Nouns:

In an attempt to include all 'legitimate' forms of a word (i.e. all forms that are reliably attested in speech or in manuscript), Dinneen often gives more than one ending for a particular case and number; the genitive singular and N/A plural are particularly prone to multiple endings. Do not be alarmed. The first ending in a series is the one you are most likely to encounter. Consider the rest of them only when you want to verify the identity of a word with an unfamiliar spelling.

Since Dinneen gives only the N/A plural of regular nouns, you must be able to tell whether the N/A plural ending is strong or weak. If you cannot yet do this, refer to the lists of plural endings in *Nouns: First Declension~Second Declension~Third Declension~Fourth Declension~Fifth Declension*. If no plural is given, the word does not have one.

Dinneen omits abbreviations for the genitive singular, which immediately follows the headword, and the N/A plural, which follows the genitive singular, unless these occur in multiple forms. See the entry for ΓΤΑΦÓΣ below.

## Commonest Formats:

N/A FOMSAIR OF A NOUN, GENITIVE FOMSAIR/Γ, DATIVE FOMSAIR/Γ if they are different from the headword, N/A PLUAS/Γ, gender, primary sense, secondary sense, tertiary sense, etc. *example* Γ M IUIH (*information about example, such as area of usage, author or title of book quoted*)

PORTIVE DEGREE OF AN ADJECTIVE, GENITIVE FOMSAIR FEMMINE FORM OF THE ADJECTIVE, which is usually the same as the comparative/superlative form, unless one of them is irregular, 'a.' to identify it as an adjective, primary sense, secondary sense, etc. *example* Γ M IUIH

I<sup>TC</sup> P. ΓS. SYNTHETIC FORM OF A VERB, ANY FOMSAIR FORM OF THE VERB, VERBAL NOUN, whether the verb is transitive and/or intransitive, primary sense, secondary sense, etc. *example* Γ M IUIH

## Explanations of Sample Entries:

ΓEAMΓ, *g. id.*, and -A, *m.*, a chance or opportunity, chance, likelihood, good luck; as *ad.*, perchance, perhaps; ΛΣ-Γ', a poor chance (*R. O.*); ΔΓ M O Γ', on the offchance

ῥεανῥ is a noun; its genitive singular is ῥεανῥ or ῥεανῥᾰ; it has no plural; the noun is masculine; its primary sense is ‘a chance or opportunity, chance, likelihood, good luck’; it can be used as an adverb to mean ‘perchance, perhaps’; ῥεανῥ-ῥεανῥ means ‘a poor chance’, according to *Réiltíní Óir* ‘Little Gold Stars’<sup>8</sup>, a rare and marvelous 2-volume dictionary that is entirely in Irish; *ḂḂ mo ῥεανῥ* means ‘on the offchance’.

ῥᾰḂ, g. -ḂḂḂ, -ḂḂḂḂ, d. -ḂḂḂḂ, -ḂḂḂḂ, pl. -ḂḂḂ, -ḂḂḂḂ, -ḂḂḂḂ, -ḂḂḂḂḂ, -ḂḂḂḂḂ and -ḂḂḂḂḂ (*O’Leary*), f., the willow-tree, an osier

ῥᾰḂ is a noun; its genitive singular is ῥḂḂḂ or ῥḂḂḂḂ; its dative singular is ῥḂḂḂḂ or ῥḂḂḂḂḂ; its plural is ῥḂḂḂḂḂ, ῥḂḂḂḂḂḂ, ῥḂḂḂḂḂḂ, ῥḂḂḂḂḂḂ, ῥḂḂḂḂḂḂ, ῥḂḂḂḂḂḂ, or ῥḂḂḂḂḂḂḂ (this last is the form that Canon Peter *O’Leary* uses in his writings), the noun is feminine, its primary sense is ‘a willow-tree’, after that ‘an osier’, one of a willow’s long, flexible branches.

ḂḂḂḂḂ, -ḂḂḂḂ, -Ḃ, f., a staff, stick, club, crutch; a branch, a young girl (*Don.*); ῥ. (ῥḂḂḂḂḂ) ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ, a staff to help one through the mire, a stilt (*Don. folk-tale*); al. ῥḂḂḂḂḂ (*O’R., Don.*), ῥḂḂḂḂḂ (*Don.*), ῥḂḂḂḂḂ (*ib.*).

ῥḂḂḂḂḂ is a noun; its genitive singular is ῥḂḂḂḂḂḂ; its N/A plural is ῥḂḂḂḂḂḂ and ‘-Ḃ’ is a weak-plural ending, so its genitive plural is the same as the headword, ῥḂḂḂḂḂ; the noun is feminine; its primary sense is ‘a staff, stick, club, crutch’; its secondary senses are ‘a branch’ and in *Donegal*, ‘a young girl’; ῥḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ or ῥḂḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ means ‘a staff to help one through the mire’ or, according to a *Donegal folk-tale*, ‘a stilt’; this word is also spelled ῥḂḂḂḂḂ in *O’Reilly’s* dictionary and in *Donegal*, ῥḂḂḂḂḂ and ῥḂḂḂḂḂ in *Donegal*.

ḂḂḂḂḂ, -ḂḂ, m., James, King James, St. James (al. *ḂḂḂḂ*); Ḃ. ḂḂḂḂḂ puffin (*Con. list*, R.I.A. 3 B. 36), ḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ id. (*Blask.*); ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ Ḃ. ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ ‘ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂḂḂ’, bad as James is we would be worse off without him (*saying*); dim. -ḂḂḂḂḂ, ḂḂḂḂḂḂ (U.), al. *ḂḂḂḂḂ* (from *ḂḂḂḂ*, which see).

ḂḂḂḂḂ is a noun; its genitive singular ending in -ḂḂ; the noun is masculine; its primary sense is the personal name ‘James’, specifically ‘King James’ or ‘Saint James’; James is also referred to as *ḂḂḂḂ*; a *ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ* is a puffin, according to both a list of words from *Connaught* and the *Royal Irish Academy* manuscript catalogued as R.I.A. 3 B. 3; *ḂḂḂḂḂ* is understood to mean *ḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ* ‘a red bird’, the selfsame puffin, in the *Blasket Islands*; *ḂḂḂḂḂ* occurs in a *saying* ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ ‘ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂḂḂ’ ‘bad as James is we would be worse off without him’; the diminutive ‘little James’, whether an affectionate or a derogatory term, is spelled *ḂḂḂḂḂḂḂḂ*, or *ḂḂḂḂḂḂḂ* in *Ulster*, and also *ḂḂḂḂḂ*, which derives from *ḂḂḂḂ*; see the entry for *ḂḂḂḂ* if you want more information about this word.

ḂḂḂḂḂ, -e, a., hard, firm; difficult, severe, close; ḂḂ c., severely, keenly, strongly, closely; solid; dried, as corn in a mill; ῥḂḂḂḂ c., a difficult situation, a hard case; stingy; c. am, stingy in dispensing; hard, of times,

conditions, etc.; ḂḂ c. ḂḂḂ ḂḂ ῥḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂ, how hard you find the times (*iron.*); ῥḂḂḂḂḂ c., hard times; in grammar, voiced, opp. to ḂḂḂ, unvoiced; ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ c., intoxicating spirits.

ḂḂḂḂḂ is an adjective; it is identified by the ‘-e’ as the genitive singular feminine of an adjective; the ‘a’ confirms that the word is an adjective; its primary sense is ‘hard, firm’, describing objects; its secondary sense is ‘difficult, severe, close’, describing conditions; it can be paired with the adverbial particle ḂḂ, and ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ means ‘severely, keenly, strongly, closely’, *ḂḂḂḂḂ* also means ‘solid’ or ‘dried’ in reference to hard, dry corn suitable for grinding in a mill; ῥḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ means ‘a difficult situation, a hard case’ or ‘stingy’; *ḂḂḂḂḂ am* means ‘stingy in dispensing’, or ‘hard’ in references to ‘times, conditions, etc.’; ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂ ḂḂ ῥḂḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂ ‘how hard you find the times’ is said ironically to a person who has no cause to complain; ῥḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ means ‘hard times’; *ḂḂḂḂḂ* is also a grammatical term for a voiced sound, as opposed to the grammatical term for an unvoiced sound, ḂḂḂ ‘soft’; ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ means ‘intoxicating spirits’.

ḂḂḂḂḂ, imper. ḂḂḂḂ, vl. ḂḂḂḂḂ, p. a., ḂḂḂḂḂḂḂ, v. tr., I drive out, expel, exile, banish, dismiss; Ḃ. ḂḂḂḂ, I send away; ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂ, he was dismissed, banished; al. ḂḂḂḂḂḂḂ, from which fut., etc. are gnly. formed; used gnly. with Ḃ

ḂḂḂḂḂ is the 1<sup>st</sup> p. sg. present of a verb; its 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. imperative is ḂḂḂḂ; its verbal noun is ḂḂḂḂḂ; its participial adjective is ḂḂḂḂḂḂḂ; the verb is always transitive; the primary sense of ḂḂḂḂḂ is ‘I drive out, expel, exile, banish, dismiss’; ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ means ‘I send away’; ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂ means ‘he was dismissed, banished’; ḂḂḂḂḂ is also spelled ḂḂḂḂḂḂḂ, and generally this is the basis for the (older) spelling of the future and conditional forms of the verb; ḂḂḂḂḂ is generally used with Ḃ, Ḃ being the simple preposition that refers to the place from which a person is being banished, as in *do dibreadh Ḃ ḂḂḂḂḂ* ‘he was banished from Heaven’.

ḂḂḂḂḂ, v. tr., irreg. (see paradigms), I say, utter, tell; with acc. of object and le with dat. of person addressed; ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ ῥḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ, I tell this much to you; also, with dep. clause with ḂḂ, ḂḂḂ, or ḂḂḂ; ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ, Ḃ. ḂḂḂ ḂḂḂ, or ḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ

ḂḂḂḂḂ is the 1<sup>st</sup> p. sg. present of a verb; the verb is always transitive; it is irregular (for its full conjugation, see Dinneen’s ‘Paradigms of Irregular Verbs’); the primary sense of ḂḂḂḂḂ is ‘I say, utter, tell’; it takes an object in the accusative case and an indirect object in the dative case, using le to indicate the person being spoken to; as in ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ ῥḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ ‘I tell this much to you’; ḂḂḂḂḂ can also be followed by a dependent clause, using the subordinating conjunctions ḂḂ ‘that’, ḂḂḂḂ/ḂḂḂ ‘that not; as in ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ ‘I say that’, ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂ ḂḂḂ ‘I say that not’, and ḂḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂ ḂḂḂḂḂ ‘I say that not’.



# Foclóir Póca ‘Pocket Dictionary’

Full Citation: *Foclóir Póca*, ed. Annraoi Ó Liatháin and Máire Nic Mhaoláin (1986; Baile Átha Cliath/Dublin: An Gúm, 1988); companion ‘Learner’s Cassette’ and Tape Handbook, ed. Dónall P. Ó Baoill; *Foclóir Scoile* (1986; Baile Átha Cliath/Dublin: An Gúm, 1994).

Description: The English-to-Irish, Irish-to-English *Foclóir Póca* offers a selection of entries abridged and adapted from Ó Dónaill’s dictionary. Predictably these books share the same typeface, abbreviations, translations, and general-use vocabulary, but numerous variants and idioms in Ó Dónaill’s entries are not in the *Foclóir Póca* entries. Two traits elevate the *Foclóir Póca* above other travel-sized dictionaries: first, it can assist a reader in deciphering Ó Dónaill’s abbreviations, and second, it is commendably grammar-conscious (see *Bonuses* below).

The *Foclóir Póca* is sold separately from the ‘Learner’s Cassette’ and Tape Handbook and can be used without them. These two accessories are handy for beginners, however, because the Tape Handbook is an expanded version of the *Foclóir Póca* pronunciation guide, while the cassette is a recording of native speakers, one for each of the three major dialects, reading the examples in the Tape Handbook.

Nearsighted readers may prefer to buy the *Foclóir Scoile*, which is the *Foclóir Póca* printed in almost the same size as Ó Dónaill’s dictionary.

Uses: Like all pocket dictionaries, the *Foclóir Póca* is valuable as a reminder and guide rather than as an instructor and authority. Of necessity, entries in the English-to-Irish and Irish-to-English sections are concise and sometimes misleadingly so. Readers who already have a basic Irish vocabulary will be able to jog their memories of half-remembered words and clarify ambiguous English equivalents (e.g. the word ‘figure’ can denote ‘shape’, ‘number’, ‘calculate’, etc.). An unfamiliar word should *always* be looked up in a larger dictionary, but if none is to hand and you cannot wait, at least look it up in both sections to avoid misunderstanding or misusing it (see for example **fast** in *Sample Entries [English-to-Irish]* below).

Bonuses: The *Foclóir Póca*’s page of ‘Abbreviations and Signs’ lists all of the abbreviations and symbols used in the entries, including several that are used but not explained in Ó Dónaill. Better still, the preface of the *Foclóir Póca* is a series of mini-lessons in grammar, syntax, and pronunciation. Readers will find there pithy summaries of noun declensions, adjective declensions, verb conjugations, and the genitive/s of verbal nouns. As in Dinneen, a separate ‘Phonetic Preface’ demystifies pronunciation by correlating I.P.A. (= International Phonetic Alphabet) symbols, *Foclóir Póca* transcription symbols, sounds in common Irish words, and sounds in common English words. ‘Word Stress’ is dealt with in surprising detail for a pocket dictionary, both in the ‘Phonetic Preface’ and in ‘The Phonetic System: Supplementary Notes’ at the end of the book.

The Irish-to-English entries are followed by appendices of ‘Geographical Names’ and names of ‘Languages’, a ‘Table of Regular Verbs’ with full conjugations of seven types of regular verb, a table of ‘The Irregular Verbs’

with full conjugations of *bí* and *is* but only the irregular forms of the other ten irregular verbs, and ‘The Phonetic System: Supplementary Notes’, a grab-bag of notes on topics such as the definite article and preverbal particles.

Obstacles: Entries in the English-to-Irish and Irish-to-English sections do not always match; if you look up an English term for its Irish equivalent, then look up that Irish word, you may not find among its definitions the English term that led you to it. The boiled-down definitions in the entries cannot and do not include all possible meanings, and frequently a word-search in the *Foclóir Póca* leads to a second word-search in Ó Dónaill or Dinneen.

**A special warning for Americans:** the spelling and sense of the English in both sections of the *Foclóir Póca* is the spelling and sense of *Hiberno* English. For example, you must look up ‘plow’, ‘jail’, ‘hood [of a car]’, and ‘curb’ under ‘plough’, ‘gaol’, ‘bonnet [of a car]’, and ‘kerb’.

## Key Abbreviations:

Most of the abbreviations and symbols used in the *Foclóir Póca* are identical to those used in Ó Dónaill’s dictionary (see *Tools: The Ó Dónaill Dictionary*), so only those specific to the *Foclóir Póca* or used differently in the *Foclóir Póca* are explained below.

‘a person’ = the translation of *duine* in the Irish-to-English section, corresponding to ‘s.o.’ for ‘someone’ in Ó Dónaill.

X, Y, Z = X, Y, and Z are interchangeable in this usage, e.g. ‘entitle vt, I am ~ d to it tá mé ina theideal, dlitear dom é’ means that the English sentence *I am entitled to it* translates into Irish as *either* ‘tá mé ina theideal’ or ‘dlitear dom é’.

X:Y = X is a form of Y, and the entry is under the spelling of Y, e.g. ‘ort: ar<sup>1</sup>’ means that **ort** is a form of the 1<sup>st</sup> **ar** listed as a headword

**f 2, f 3, f 4, f 5** = this word is a *feminine* noun belonging to the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, or 5<sup>th</sup> declension. If no number is given, the noun is irregular.

**m1, m2, m3, m4, m5** = this word is a *masculine* noun belonging to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, or 5<sup>th</sup> declension. If no number is given, the noun is irregular.

**a1, a2, a3** = this word is an *adjective* belonging to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> declension.

## Notes on Verbs:

Headwords that are forms of irregular verbs are not identified as such. The *Foclóir Póca* assumes that you will recognize all eleven irregular verbs and will consult ‘The Irregular Verbs’ appendix if you need more information than the entries provide.

The entry for a verb does not include its past participle or its verbal noun. A past participle has its own entry as an adjective and a verbal noun has its own entry as a noun. In neither case is there any indication that the word is a verb-form, and you will have to come up with the 2<sup>nd</sup> sg. imperative of the verb on your own.



## Notes on Nouns:

Plural forms of regular nouns are usually omitted from the entries. Because the declension of a regular noun is identified by number, and paradigms of the noun declensions are provided in the preface, a reader is expected to be able to formulate the plurals of any headword by modelling it on the appropriate paradigm. Consequently the entries give only irregular plurals or strong plurals that are not represented in the paradigms.

## Commonest Formats (Irish-English):

**N/A singular of noun** *Foclóir Póca* pronunciation *gender* + declension number, N/A plural, **any irregular forms of the noun** primary sense of the noun, *example of usage*; secondary sense of the noun, etc.

**positive degree of adjective** *Foclóir Póca* pronunciation *a* + declension number (**any irregular forms of the adjective**) primary sense of the adjective, *example of usage*; secondary sense of the adjective, etc.

**2<sup>nd</sup> p. singular imperative of the verb** *Foclóir Póca* pronunciation *transitive and/or intransitive* (**any irregular forms of the verb, unless the verb is irregular**) primary sense of the verb, *example of usage*; secondary sense of the verb, etc.

## Explanations of Sample Entries (Irish-English):

**anam** anəm m3, pl ~acha soul; life, *duine gan* ~ unfeeling person, lifeless person, *tá a h-istigh ann* she is devoted to him, *Dia le m'~* God bless my soul, (*mo*) *sheacht mh'~ thú* bravo, well done, *beidh d'~ agam* I'll kill you

**anam** is pronounced 'ann-um' with the stress on the first syllable; it is a masculine noun of the 3<sup>rd</sup> declension; it has a strong plural, **anamacha**; its primary sense is 'soul'; its secondary sense is 'life'; the phrase *duine gan anam* denotes an 'unfeeling' or 'lifeless' person, one who shows no emotion or energy; the idiom *tá a hanam istigh ann* means 'she is devoted to him'; the expression *Dia le m'anam* means 'God bless my soul'; *seacht mh'anam thú* or *mo sheacht mh'anam thú* is a phrase used to commend someone; *beidh d'anam agam* is a threat meaning 'I'll kill you'.

**bó** bo: f, gs & gpl ~ npl **ba** cow

**bó** is pronounced 'boh'; it is an irregular feminine noun; its genitive singular and genitive plural are both the same as the headword, **bó**; it has an irregular nominative plural, **ba**.

**cruinn** krin' a1 round; gathered; exact, accurate; clear, coherent, *éist go ~ leis* listen attentively to him

**cruinn** is pronounced 'krin'; it is an adjective of the 1<sup>st</sup> declension; its primary sense is 'round'; its secondary sense is 'gathered'; other senses are 'exact, accurate' and 'clear, coherent'; when combined with the adverbial particle *go*, **cruinn** can also mean 'attentively', as in *éist go cruinn leis* 'listen to him attentively'.

**fada** fadə a3 (*comp faide*) long; protracted, tedious, *is ~ go* it will be a long time until, *go mór (is go fada)* ~ ever so much

**fada** is pronounced 'fa-duh' with the stress on the first syllable; it is an adjective of the 3<sup>rd</sup> declension; it has an irregular comparative/superlative form, **faide**; its primary sense is 'long'; its secondary sense is 'protracted, tedious'; *is fada go* means 'it will be a long time until'; *go mór fada* or *go mór is go fada* means 'ever so much'.

**foghlaim** fauləm' ~ fo:ləm' f3 learning; instruction, teaching vt & i, pres. ~ionn learn; experience; instruct, teach

**foghlaim** is pronounced 'fow-lem' or 'foe-lem' with the stress on the first syllable; it is a feminine noun of the 3<sup>rd</sup> declension; its primary sense is 'learning'; its secondary sense is 'instruction' or 'teaching'; it is also a verb that may be transitive or intransitive; its present tense is **foghlaimionn**; its primary sense as a verb is 'learn'; its secondary sense as a verb is 'experience'; other senses are 'instruct, teach'.

## Commonest Formats (English-Irish):

**N/A singular of noun** Irish equivalent/s, *idioms in English* Irish equivalents if also a verb, whether transitive and/or intransitive Irish equivalent/s, *idioms in English* Irish equivalents

**positive degree of adjective** Irish equivalent/s; *idioms in English* Irish equivalents

**2<sup>nd</sup> p. singular imperative of the verb** whether transitive and/or intransitive equivalents in Irish *idioms in English and common usages* Irish equivalents

## Explanations of Sample Entries (English-Irish):

**curse** n eascaine, mallacht, mionn mór, crístín vt & i eascainigh, mallaigh

**curse** is a noun; its Irish equivalents are 'eascaine', 'mallacht', 'mionn mór', and 'crístín'; it is also a verb that can be transitive or intransitive; its Irish equivalents as a verb are 'eascainigh' and 'mallaigh'.

**fast**<sup>2</sup> a docht, doscaoilte; tapa, gasta, sciobtha, *to be ~ asleep* bheith i do chnap codlata, i do thoirchim suain

**fast** is the 2<sup>nd</sup> headword spelled 'fast'; it is an adjective; its Irish equivalents in the sense of 'tight, secure'<sup>9</sup> are 'docht' and 'doscaoilte'; its Irish equivalents in the sense of 'quick' are 'tapa', 'gasta', 'sciobtha'; *to be fast asleep* is 'bheith i do chnap codlata' or 'bheith i do thoirchim suain', so that 'She was fast asleep' is 'Bhí sí ina cnap codlata' or 'Bhí sí ina thoirchim suain'.

**pour** vt & i doirt, steall, scaird, ~ out cuir amach, líon amach, dáil, ~ ing rain ag doirteadh, ag stealladh, fearthainne, ~ing in ag plódú, ag líonadh, isteach

**pour** is a verb that may be transitive or intransitive; its Irish equivalents are 'doirt', 'steall', and 'scaird'; **pour out** is 'cuir amach', 'líon amach', or 'dáil'; **pouring rain** is 'ag doirteadh fearthainne' or 'ag stealladh fearthainne'; **pouring in** is 'ag plódú isteach' or 'ag líonadh isteach'.

## Additional

The items under each heading are listed from most-accessible-to-a-learner down to least-accessible-to-a-learner. I have included only items that I have actually consulted or read.

Items whose titles are in Irish are written entirely in Irish unless otherwise noted.

Where there are multiple editions or printings, the publication years of only the original and the current version are given.

Other notes as deemed necessary follow the publication information.

\* = this item was out of print when the Book was published, but is well worth consulting in a library or buying at a used-book store.

+ = there are tapes for this item. Note that tapes can sometimes be purchased separately and at other times are obtainable only in a package with the book.

### Grammar

*Briathra na Gaeilge: Regular and Irregular.* Déaglán Ó Murchú agus Pádraig Ó Murchú. Tamhlacht, Co. Bhaile Átha Cliath: Folens agus a Chuid., Tta., 1975.

*New Irish Grammar.* Christian Brothers. 1980. Dublin: C. J. Fallon, 1999.

*Cruinnscriobh na Gaeilge.* Ciarán Mac Murchaidh. 2002. Baile Átha Cliath: Cois Life, an dara heagrán, 2004.

*Gramadach na Gaeilge agus Litriú na Gaeilge: An Caighdeán Oifigiúil 1958.* Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair, an dara heagrán, 1979.

*Graiméar na Gaeilge: An Caighdeán Oifigiúil.* Máiréad Ní Ghráda. Longman Brún agus Ó Nualláin, n.d. This shorter version of *Gramadach na Gaeilge agus Litriú na Gaeilge* is easier to consult because the detailed explanations have been omitted.

*Graiméar Gaeilge na mBráithre Críostaí.* 1960. Baile Átha Cliath: An Gúm, an dara heagrán, 1999.

*Irish Grammar: A Basic Handbook.* Noel McGonagle. 1988. Indreabhán, Conamara: Cló Iar-Chonnachta, 1991.

\* *Réchúrsa Gramadaí.* Brian Mac Giolla Phádraig. 3ú heagrán. Longman Brún agus Ó Nualláin, n.d. If this book had an English translation, *A Learner's Guide to Irish* would be unnecessary.

### Dialects

+ *Learning Irish.* Mícheál Ó Siadhail. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988. Also available on-line <http://www.maths.tcd.ie/gaeilge/gaelic.html>

*An Teanga Bheo: Corca Dhuibhne.* Diarmuid Ó Sé. Baile Átha Cliath. Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann, 1995.

*An Teanga Bheo: Gaeilge Uladh.* Dónall P. Ó Baoill. Baile Átha Cliath. Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann, 1996.

*An Teanga Bheo: Gaeilge Chonamara.* Séamas Ó Murchú. Baile Átha Cliath. Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann, 1998.

*Irish Dialects Past and Present.* Thomas F. O'Rahilly. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976.

*The Irish of Ring, Co. Waterford: A Phonetic Study.* Risteard B. Breatnach. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1947.

### History of the Language

*The Irish Language: An Overview and Guide.* Darerca Ní Chartúir. NY: Avena Press, 2002. Included is a list of Irish-language resources, some of which are included here with full bibliographic information.

*The Irish Language.* Máirtín Ó Murchú. Aspects of Ireland 10. Dublin: Department of Foreign Affairs and Bord na Gaeilge, 1985.

*Stair na Gaeilge.* Ed. Kim McCone, Damian McManus, Cathal Ó Háinle, Nicholas Williams, and Liam Breatnach. Maigh Nuad: Roinn na Sean-Ghaeilge, Coláiste Phádraig, 1994.

### Courses

+ *Buntús Cainte: First Steps in Spoken Irish 1-3.* Tomás Ó Domhnalláin. 1967, 1968. Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1983.

+ *Cogar.* RTE/Gael-Linn, 1989. These are not scripted dialogues read aloud. The tapes were assembled from interviews with fluent speakers of Connemara Irish on the streets and in the studio, and as such, they offer a sense of the natural rhythms of the language.

+ *Teach Yourself Irish.* Myles Dillon and Donncha Ó Cróinín. 1961. London: English Universities Press, Ltd., 1962. This course came with an LP that is now very difficult to find. The recordings include a range of Munster speakers who demonstrate the variations within a major dialect.

+ *Teach Yourself Irish: A Complete Course for Beginners.* Diarmuid Ó Sé and Joseph Shiels. London: Hodder Headline Plc, 1993.

*Irish without Worry.* Rev. D. A. Collier, O.M.I. Dublin: M. H. Gill and Sons, Ltd., 1943.

*Progress in Irish.* Máiréad Ní Ghráda. Dublin: The Educational Company, n.d.

+ *Beart agus Briathar 1-3.* Pól de Bhál. Baile Átha Cliath: An Cló Ceilteach, 1989, 1990, 1991. All three volumes have accompanying workbooks for those who wish to do the exercises in a separate, neatly bound volume.

*An Ghaeilge: Podręcznik Języka Irlandzkiego.* Aidan Doyle and Edmund Gussmann. Lublin: Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1998. The portions of this book that are not in Irish are in Polish, but it includes useful examples and exercises.

## Proverbs

I cannot exaggerate the value of memorizing Modern Irish proverbs. Not only will you enjoy their shrewdness, humor, and elegance of expression, you will find them an easy and painless way to internalize grammar and syntax.

Chordcraft proverb postcards. Cheap and available all over Ireland, each one features a single proverb in Irish and in English, with an appropriate illustration. Collect the set and use them as bookmarkers, prop them on your desk, fasten them to your fridge and filing cabinet with magnets. They'll make you smile and make studying more fun.

*Ireland of the Proverb*. Liam Mac Con Iomaire with photographs by Bill Doyle. Dublin: Town House, 1988. Doyle's black-and-white photographs provide a visual commentary, by turns illustrative, thought-provoking, and humorous, of Mac Con Iomaire's choice selection of proverbs. This beautiful book makes you want to learn Irish because you want to remember the proverbs.

*The Wasp in the Mug*. Gabriel Rosenstock with illustrations by Pieter Sluis. Dublin: Mercier Press, 1993. A rich serving of different kinds of proverbs, this collection has facing-page translations, comical, explanatory drawings, and footnotes that are often as entertaining as the proverbs themselves – no surprise given Rosenstock's prominence as a Modern Irish poet.

*Seanfhocail na Mumhan*. An Seabhac. 1926. Pádraig Ua Maoileoin, ead. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Baile Átha Cliath: An Gúm, 1984. A treasure-trove of 2,600 proverbs, blessings, curses, toasts, comparisons, etc. collected in Munster.

*Seanfhocla Chonnacht I, II*. Tomás Ó Máille. Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1948, 1952.

*Seanfhocail Uladh*. Énri Ó Muirgheasa. 1907. Nollaig Ó hUrmholtaigh, ead. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1976. A mother lode of 1,800 proverbs and sayings collected in Ulster.

# Preverbal Particles

A **Preverbal Particle** *always* precedes a conjugated form of the verb and must be translated as part of that verb.

Most Preverbal Particles have one form that precedes verbs in the present, future, conditional, or imperfect, and another form that precedes verbs in the past tense *only*. This division of tenses and moods holds true for regular and irregular verbs, with one exception: **the dependent past tense forms of *bí, téigh, déan, and feic* are preceded by the Preverbal Particles that precede the present, future, conditional, and imperfect**, i.e. *ní raibh, an ndeachaigh, go ndearna, nach bhfaca*, etc. rather than ~~*ní raibh, an dreachaigh, gur dhearna, nár fhaca*~~, etc.

The Copula is *never* preceded by a Preverbal Particle because the information conveyed by Preverbal Particles is already contained in special forms of the Copula (see *The Copula: Forms*).

## I. The Perfective Preverbal Particle

The Perfective Preverbal Particle ***do*<sup>L</sup>** indicates that a following verb is in the past tense. *Do*<sup>L</sup> used to be written in front of every past-tense verb, including those with initial consonants, but ***Caighdeán* spelling omits *do*<sup>L</sup> unless a following verb begins with a vowel or with 'f + Vowel', in which case *do*<sup>L</sup> appears as *d*<sup>L</sup>**.

2 <sup>nd</sup> Sg. Imperative	Old Spelling	<i>Caighdeán</i> Spelling
cuir 'put'	<u>do</u> chuir sí	chuir sí
ól 'drink'	<u>d</u> ól sí	d'ól sí
fág 'leave'	<u>d</u> 'fhág sí	d'fhág sí
scríobh 'write'	<u>do</u> scríobh sí	scríobh sí
déan 'do'	<u>do</u> rinne sí	rinne sí
faigh 'get'	<u>do</u> fuair <sup>10</sup> sí	fuair sí

## II. Negative and/or Interrogative Preverbal Particles

A **Negative Preverbal Particle** indicates that the verb should be translated with the word 'not' (e.g. *ní raibh sé* 'he was not').

An **Interrogative Preverbal Particle** indicates that the verb should be translated as the beginning of a question (e.g. *an raibh sé?* 'was he?').

A **Negative Interrogative Preverbal Particle** indicates that the verb should be translated with the word 'not' at the beginning of a question (*nach raibh sé?* 'wasn't he?').

	All Tenses and Moods <i>except</i> the Past	Past Tense only
Negative	ní <sup>L</sup>	níor <sup>L</sup>
Interrogative	an <sup>E</sup>	ar <sup>L</sup>
Negative	nach <sup>E</sup>	nár <sup>L</sup>
Interrogative 'where?'	cá <sup>E</sup>	cár <sup>L</sup>

Note: If an Irregular Verb has **dependent past-tense forms**, they follow *ní*, *an*, *nach*, and *cá*; *níor*, *ar*, *nár*, and *cár* are not used. **Fuair 'got' and dúirt 'said'** also follow *ní*, *an*, *nach*, and *cá*, and again, *níor*, *ar*, *nár*, and *cár* are not used. There is one final surprise: *ní* eclipses *fuair*, *faighidh*, and *faigheadh*.

Examples of Negative and/or Interrogative Preverbal Particles:

Ní<sup>11</sup> sé inár measc.  
'He is not among us.'

Ní dheachaigh siad ar scoil.  
'They did not go to school.'

Níor imigh mé aréir.  
'I didn't depart last night.'

An íosfá<sup>12</sup> uibheacha uaine agus liamhás?  
'Would you eat green eggs and ham?'

An bhfaca nó nach bhfaca tú muid?  
'Did you or didn't you see us?'

Ar cheannaigh nó nár cheannaigh sibh iad?  
'Did you or didn't you buy them?'

Cá n-imríodh sibh peil?  
'Where used you to play football [soccer]?'

Cár fhoghlaim Bairbre Gaeilge?  
'Where did Bairbre learn Irish?'

### III. Preverbal Particles for Commanding or Wishing

**Ná<sup>h</sup>** indicates a **negative command**. It may precede the imperative mood in any person or number.

**Go<sup>E</sup>** indicates a **positive wish**. It may precede the present subjunctive in any person or number.

**Nár<sup>L</sup>** indicates a **negative wish**. It may precede the present subjunctive in any person or number.

Examples of Preverbal Particles in Commands or Wishes:

Ná habair é!  
'Don't say/mention it!'

Go maire na mná go deo!  
'May the women live forever!'

Nár aithní an diabhal tú!  
'May the Devil not recognize you!'

☛ *Go maire na mná go deo!* is a drinking-toast. A fuller version is *Sláinte na bhfear agus go maire na mná go deo!* '[I propose] the men's health and may the women live forever!' *Nár aithní an diabhal tú!* is a humorous blessing, implying as it does that the addressee might well deserve to be recognized by the Devil.



# Verbs

## Person, Number, Tense, Mood

### EVERY CONJUGATED VERB-FORM HAS PERSON, NUMBER, TENSE AND MOOD.

**Person** indicates who is performing the action. The possible persons are first, second, and third.

**Number** indicates whether one person or more than one person is performing the action. The possible numbers are singular and plural.

The possible combinations of person and number are:

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> Person	mé 'I'	sinn/muid 'we'
2 <sup>nd</sup> Person	tú 'you'	sibh 'you'
3 <sup>rd</sup> Person	sí, sé 's/he, it'	siad 'they'

**Subjects that are nouns take the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. singular form of the verb even if the nouns are plural**, e.g. *rithfeadh an sionnach* 'the fox would run', *d'fhásadh na luibheanna seo go tapa* 'these herbs used to grow quickly', *thit buidéal beorach anuas den bhalla* 'a bottle of beer fell off the wall'.

The **Autonomous** (= Impersonal) **Form** of the verb does not have a subject. A following noun or a pronoun is not the performer, but the object of the action and is in the accusative (= objective) case. An Autonomous Form may also be followed by a preposition, a prepositional pronoun, or a dependent clause.

Examples of the Autonomous Verb with a Noun or Pronoun Object:

Labhraítear Gaeilge anseo.  
'Irish is spoken here.'

Dhéantaí na báid seo d'adhmaid.  
'These boats used to be made of wood.'

Seolfar iad ar an bhfarraige.  
'They will be sailed on the sea.'

Examples of the Autonomous Verb with a Preposition or Prepositional Pronoun:

Nach nglaofaí ar an úinéir?  
'Wouldn't the owner be called?'

Fiafraíodh dínn faoin timpiste.  
'We were asked about the accident.'

Examples with a Dependent Clause:

Creideadh gur bádh iad.  
'It was believed that they were drowned.'

Ach nochtfaí gur snámh siad i dtír.  
'But it would be discovered that they swam to shore.'

You will have noticed in the examples above that an **Autonomous Form is translated as a passive verb**. In English the closest thing to an Autonomous Form is a passive verb, in which the subject suffers the action (e.g. 'they were drowned') instead of performing it (e.g. 'they drowned their sorrows in chocolate'). Note that **this requires translating the object of an Autonomous Form in Irish as the subject of a passive verb in English**.

**Tense** indicates the time of the action. The tenses in Irish are present,<sup>13</sup> past, imperfect (also called 'past habitual'), and future.

<b>Present</b> (now)	<u>Ceannaím</u> leabhair. 'I <u>buy</u> books.'
<b>Past</b> (before)	<u>Cheannaigh mé</u> leabhair. 'I <u>bought</u> books.'
<b>Imperfect</b> (habitually before)	<u>Cheannaínn</u> leabhair. 'I <u>used to buy</u> books.'
<b>Future</b> (in time to come)	<u>Ceannóidh mé</u> leabhair. 'I <u>will buy</u> books.'

**Mood** indicates the purpose or reality of the action, and every verb tense is in a particular mood. The moods in Irish are indicative, conditional, imperative, and subjunctive.

<b>Indicative Mood</b> (reality of action is not an issue; used in statements, questions, and exclamations)	<u>Ceannaím</u> leabhair. 'I <u>buy</u> books.'	Present Tense
	<u>Ar cheannaigh sibh</u> leabhair? ' <u>Did you buy</u> books?'	Past Tense
	Is léir go <u>gceannaídís</u> leabhair! 'It's clear that <u>they used to buy</u> books!'	Imperfect Tense
	<u>Nach gceannófar</u> leabhair? ' <u>Won't books be bought?</u> '	Future Tense
<b>Conditional</b> (action hasn't happened; used in requests, suppositions, contrary-to-fact statements, and questions)	<u>Cheannóinn</u> leabhair. 'I <u>would buy</u> books.'	
	<u>Nach gceannófá</u> leabhair freisin? ' <u>Wouldn't you buy</u> books too?'	
	Is cinnte go <u>gceannóidís</u> leabhair dá mbeadh airgead acu. 'It's certain that <u>they would buy</u> books if they had money.'	
	<u>Ní cheannófaí</u> leabhair agus mise as láthair! ' <u>Books would not be bought</u> in my absence!'	
<b>Imperative</b> (action is being ordered; used in commands)	<u>Ceannaím</u> leabhair! ' <u>Let me buy</u> books!'	

Ceannaigh leabhair!  
'Buy books!' (2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg.)

Ceannaíodh sí/sé leabhair!  
'Let her/him buy books!'

Ceannaímis leabhair!  
'Let us buy books!'

Ceannaí leabhair!  
'Buy books!' (2<sup>nd</sup> p. pl.)

Ceannaídís leabhair!  
'Let them buy books!'

Ceannaítear leabhair ar fud an domhain mhóir!  
'Let books be bought throughout the world!'

Go gceannaí mé/tú/sí/sé/sibh/siad leabhair!  
'May I/you/she/he/you/they buy books!'

Go gceannaímid leabhair!  
'May we buy books!'

Go gceannaítear leabhair gach lá!  
'May books be bought every day!'

### Subjunctive

(action is desired;  
used in wishes, curses,  
and blessings)

## Analytic Forms vs. Synthetic Forms

There are two types of conjugated verb-forms, Analytic and Synthetic.

The ending of an **Analytic Form** specifies the tense and/or mood of the verb but reveals nothing about the subject, so an Analytic Form is followed by a subject pronoun or noun.

Examples of Analytic Forms Followed by Subject Pronoun or Noun:

Ceannaíonn an bhean an iomarca leabhar.  
'The woman buys too many books.'

Nár cheannaigh siad cúpla leabhar?  
'Didn't they buy a few books?'

Creidtear go gceannóidh a gcairde leabhair ar a son.  
'It is believed that their friends will buy books on their behalf.'

The ending of a **Synthetic Form** specifies the person and number of the subject as well as the tense and/or mood of the verb, so a Synthetic Form is *not* followed by a subject pronoun or noun.

Examples of Synthetic Forms:

Ceannaím leabhair.  
'I buy books.'

Cheannaíteá leabhair.

'You used to buy books.'

Cheannóidís leabhair.  
'They would buy books.'

Go gceannaímid leabhair!  
'May we buy books!'

The *Caighdeán* has Synthetic Forms for the 1<sup>st</sup> p. sg. and pl. in the present; the 1<sup>st</sup> p. pl. in the future and the past; and the 1<sup>st</sup> p. sg. and pl., the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg., and the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. pl. in the imperfect and conditional. Synthetic Forms also exist in other persons and numbers in the present, past, and future tenses, and these are still common in Munster Irish

## Conjugation

**To Conjugate a Verb** is to provide forms of the verb that specify person, number, tense and mood (see *Verbs: Person, Number, Tense, Mood*). To conjugate a verb, take the Root of the Verb, lenite it for the past, imperfect, or conditional, add the Stem if necessary, then add the appropriate Personal Ending.

The **Root of the Verb** is identical to the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. imperative (e.g. *ceannaigh* 'buy').

A **Personal Ending** is a series of letters that indicates the tense and mood of the verb (e.g. *ceannóidh tú* 'you will buy') and in Synthetic Forms, also the person and number of the subject (e.g. *cheannófaí* 'you would buy').<sup>14</sup>

A **Paradigm** (= a Conjugation) is a set of all the conjugated forms of a verb in every person, number, tense and mood. The Verbal Noun and the Past Participle may also be included.

### Paradigm of *ceannaigh* 'buy'

	Present Tense, Indicative Mood	Past Tense, Indicative Mood	Future Tense, Indicative Mood
1 <sup>st</sup> p.sg.	ceannaím 'I buy'	cheannaigh mé 'I bought'	ceannóidh mé 'I will buy'
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.sg.	ceannaíonn tú 'you buy'	cheannaigh tú 'you bought'	ceannóidh tú 'you will buy'
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.sg.	ceannaíonn sí/sé 's/he buys'	cheannaigh sí/sé 's/he bought'	ceannóidh sí/sé 's/he will buy'
1 <sup>st</sup> p.pl.	ceannaímid 'we buy'	cheannaíomar 'we bought'	ceannóimid 'we will buy'
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.pl.	ceannaíonn sibh 'you buy'	cheannaigh sibh 'you bought'	ceannóidh sibh 'you will buy'

3 <sup>rd</sup> p.pl.	ceannaíonn siad 'they buy'	cheannaigh siad 'they bought'	ceannóidh said 'they will buy'
Autonomous	ceannaítear é 'it is bought'	ceannaíodh é 'it was bought'	ceannófar é 'it will be bought'
	<i>Imperfect Tense, Indicative Mood</i>	Conditional Mood	Imperative Mood
1 <sup>st</sup> p.sg.	cheannáinn 'I used to buy'	cheannóinn 'I would buy'	ceannaím 'let me buy'
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.sg.	cheannaíteá 'you used to buy'	cheannófá 'you would buy'	ceannaigh 'you (sg.) buy'
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.sg.	cheannaíodh sí/sé 's/he used to buy'	cheannódh sí/sé 's/he would buy'	ceannaíodh sí/sé 'let her/him buy'
1 <sup>st</sup> p.pl.	cheannaímis 'we used to buy'	cheannóimis 'we would buy'	ceannaímis 'let us buy'
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.pl.	cheannaíodh sibh 'you used to buy'	cheannódh sibh 'you would buy'	ceannaígí 'you (pl.) buy'
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.pl.	cheannaídis 'they used to buy'	cheannóidís 'they would buy'	ceannaídis 'let them buy'
Autonomous	cheannaítear é 'it used to be bought'	cheannófaí é 'it would be bought'	ceannaítear é 'let it be bought'
	<i>Present Tense, Subjunctive Mood singular</i>	plural	
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	go gceannaí mé 'may I buy'	go gceannaímid 'may we buy'	
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	go gceannaí tú 'may you buy'	go gceannaí sibh 'may you buy'	
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	go gceannaí sí/sé 'may s/he buy'	go gceannaí siad 'may they buy'	
Autonomous	go gceannaítear é 'may it be bought'		
<b>Verbal Noun</b>	ceannach 'buying'		
<b>Past Participle</b>	ceannaithe 'bought'		

The following paradigms provide only the present, past, future, imperfect, and conditional verb-forms because:

- 1) the imperative is seldom used in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons;
- 2) the present subjunctive is most easily learned by memorizing expressions (e.g. *go raibh maith agat* 'thank you');
- 3) the Verbal Noun and the Past Participle are featured separately in *The Verbal Noun: Features~Functions*.

If a verb-form is not given in a particular person or number, it is an Analytic Form that can be modelled on the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. Simply retain the verb-form for the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. and replace the pronoun *tú* with *mé*, *sé*, *sí*, *siad*, or *sibh*.

## Regular vs. Irregular

There are two types of verb: Regular and Irregular.

A **Regular Verb** has the same root for all tenses and moods.

An **Irregular Verb** does not have the same root for all tenses and moods. Irish has eleven Irregular Verbs: *abair* 'say', *tabhair* 'give', *faigh* 'get', *téigh* 'go', *bí* 'be', *beir* 'bear', *tar* 'come', *déan* 'do', *feic* 'see', *clois* 'hear', and *ith* 'eat'. All of them except *ith* have a distinctive past-tense root, many have a distinctive future/conditional root (**the conditional and future always have the same root**), and a few have dependent forms in the present, past, or future/conditional.

Some Irregular Verbs have 2 sets of forms, Independent and Dependent, for the same tense and mood.

The **Independent Form** can stand first in a statement (e.g. *tá fear an phoist anseo* 'the postman is here').

The **Dependent Form** *cannot* stand first in a statement and *must* be used whenever the verb is preceded by a preverbal particle (e.g. *an bhfuil sé?* 'is he?'), a subordinating conjunction (e.g. *go bhfuil sé* 'that he is'), or an indirect relative particle (e.g. *an teach a bhfuil sé ann* 'the house in which he is').

If an Irregular Verb has Dependent Forms in the past tense, they take the preverbal particles, subordinating conjunctions, and relative particles that are used with the present, imperfect, conditional, and future *rather than* the ones that are used with the past tense of Regular Verbs (e.g. *an raibh sé?* 'was he?', *go raibh sé* 'that he was', *an teach a raibh sé ann* 'the house in which he was' in contrast to *ar dhún sé?* 'did he shut?', *gur dhún sé* 'that he shut', *an teach ar dhún sé an doras ann* 'the house in which he shut the door'). The same is true of the flamboyantly irregular independent past-tense forms *fuair* 'got' and *dúirt* 'said' (e.g. *an bhfuair sé?* 'did he get?' *nach ndúirt sé?* 'didn't he say?')

In the following charts, Regular Verbs are classified by:

- a) **Number of syllables** (Monosyllabic = 1 syllable, Polysyllabic = 2 or more syllables)
- b) **Final consonant/s** (broad, slender, or specific combinations such as -gh)
- c) **Quality of vowels** (long or short)
- d) **Initial letter** ('f', a consonant other than 'f', or a vowel)

The chart below reflects the conjugations of the Irregular Verbs according to the *Caighdeán* and groups them by their irregular features. There are variants in all three major dialects.

## Key Symbols:

\_\_ = the past tense takes the preverbal particles, subordinating conjunctions, and indirect relative particles used with the present, imperfect, conditional, and future

X = the root in this tense is different from the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. imperative

() = the tense/s that have dependent form/s

	Present	Past	Imperfect	Future/ Conditional	Dependent Forms
<b>abair</b> 'say'		X	X	X	X
<b>tabhair</b> 'give, bring'	X	X	X	X	
<b>faigh</b> 'get'		X		X	X (Fut./Cond.)
<b>téigh</b> 'go'		X		X	X (Past)
<b>bí</b> 'be'	X			X	X (Present, Past)
<b>beir</b> 'bear'		X		X	
<b>tar</b> 'come'		X		X	
<b>déan</b> 'do'		X			X (Past)
<b>feic</b> 'see'		X			X (Past)
<b>clois</b> 'hear'		X			
<b>ith</b> 'eat'				X	

## Regular Verbs

### Monosyllabics with a Final Consonant<sup>15</sup>

Monosyllabic Verb with Broad Final Consonant: **las** 'light'

Monosyllabic Verb with Slender Final Consonant and Final -th: **caith** 'spend'

Monosyllabic Verb with Initial Vowel: **ól** 'drink'

Monosyllabic Verb with Initial 'F': **fás** 'grow'

#### Present

#### Affirmative

lasaim 'I light'  
caithim 'I spend'  
ólaim 'I drink'  
fásaim 'I grow'

lasann tú 'you light'  
caitheann tú 'you spend'  
ólann tú 'you drink'  
fásann tú 'you grow'

#### Past

las mé 'I lit'  
chaith mé 'I spent'  
d'ól mé 'I drank'  
d'fhás mé 'I grew'

las tú 'you lit'  
chaith tú 'you spent'  
d'ól tú 'you drank'  
d'fhás tú 'you grew'

#### Present

**Affirmative** lasaimid 'we light'  
caithimid 'we spend'  
ólaimid 'we drink'  
fásaimid 'we grow'

lastar é 'it is lit'  
caitear<sup>16</sup> é 'it is spent'  
óltar é 'it is drunk'  
fástar é 'it is grown'

#### Negative

ní lasaim 'I do not light'  
ní chaithim 'I do not spend'  
ní ólaim 'I do not drink'  
ní fhásaim 'I do not grow'

ní lasann tú 'you do not light'  
ní chaitheann tú 'you do not spend'  
ní ólann tú 'you do not drink'  
ní fhásann tú 'you do not grow'

ní lasaimid 'we do not light'  
ní chaithimid 'we do not spend'  
ní ólaimid 'we do not drink'  
ní fhásaimid 'we do not grow'

ní lastar é 'it is not lit'  
ní chaitear é 'it is not spent'  
ní óltar é 'it is not drunk'  
ní fhástar é 'it is not grown'

#### Imperfect

**Affirmative** lasainn 'I used to light'  
chaithinn 'I used to spend'  
d'ólainn 'I used to drink'  
d'fhásainn 'I used to grow'

lastá 'you used to light'  
chaiteá<sup>18</sup> 'you used to spend'  
d'óltá 'you used to drink'  
d'fhástá 'you used to grow'

lasadh sí/sibh 'she/you used to light'  
chaitheadh sí/sibh 'she/you used to spend'  
d'óladh sí/sibh 'she/you used to drink'  
d'fhásadh sí/sibh 'she/you used to grow'

lasaimis 'we used to light'  
chaithimis 'we used to spend'  
d'ólaimis 'we used to drink'  
d'fhásaimis 'we used to grow'

lasaidís 'they used to light'  
chaithidís 'they used to spend'

#### Past

lasamar 'we lit'  
chaitheamar 'we spent'  
d'ólamar 'we drank'  
d'fhásamar 'we grew'

lasadh é 'it was lit'  
caitheadh é 'it was spent'  
óladh é 'it was drunk'  
fásadh é 'it was grown'

níor las mé 'I did not light'  
níor chaith mé 'I did not spend'  
níor ól mé 'I did not drink'  
níor fhás mé 'I did not grow'

níor las tú 'you did not light'  
níor chaith tú 'you did not spend'  
níor ól tú 'you did not drink'  
níor fhás tú 'you did not grow'

níor lasamar 'we did not light'  
níor chaitheamar 'we did not spend'  
níor ólamar 'we did not drink'  
níor fhásamar 'we did not grow'

níor lasadh é 'it was not lit'  
níor caitheadh<sup>17</sup> é 'it was not spent'  
níor óladh é 'it was not drunk'  
níor fásadh é 'it was not grown'

#### Conditional

lasfainn 'I would light'  
chaithfinn 'I would spend'  
d'ólfainn 'I would drink'  
d'fhásfainn 'I would grow'

lasfá 'you would light'  
chaithfeá 'you would spend'  
d'ólfá 'you would drink'  
d'fhásfá 'you would grow'

lasfadh sí/sibh 'she/you would light'  
chaitheadh sí/sibh 'she/you would spend'  
d'ólfadh sí/sibh 'she/you would drink'  
d'fhásfadh sí/sibh 'she/you would grow'

lasfaimis 'we would light'  
chaithfimis 'we would spend'  
d'ólfaimis 'we would drink'  
d'fhásfaimis 'we would grow'

lasfaidís 'they would light'  
chaithfidís 'they would spend'



### Imperfect

**Affirmative** d'ólaidís 'they used to drink'  
d'fhásaidís 'they used to grow'

### Imperfect Autonomous

lastaí é 'it used to be lit'  
chaití é 'it used to be spent'  
d'óltaí é 'it used to be drunk'  
d'fhástaí é 'it used to be grown'

### Imperfect

**Negative** ní lasainn 'I used not light'  
ní chaithinn 'I used not spend'  
ní ólainn 'I used not drink'  
ní fhásainn 'I used not grow'

ní lastá 'you used not light'  
ní chaiteá 'you used not spend'  
ní óltá 'you used not drink'  
ní fhástá 'you used not grow'

ní lasadh sí/sibh  
'she/you used not light'  
ní chaitheadh sí/sibh  
'she/you used not spend'  
ní óladh sí/sibh  
'she/you used not drink'  
ní fhásadh sí/sibh  
'she/you used not grow'

ní lasaimis 'we used not light'  
ní chaithimis 'we used not spend'  
ní ólaimis 'we used not drink'  
ní fhásaimis 'we used not grow'

ní lasaidís 'they used not light'  
ní chaithidís 'they used not spend'  
ní ólaidís 'they used not drink'  
ní fhásaidís 'they used not grow'

### Imperfect Autonomous

ní lastaí é 'it used not be lit'  
ní chaití é 'it used not be spent'  
ní óltaí é 'it used not be drunk'  
ní fhástaí é 'it used not be grown'

### Future

#### Affirmative

lasfaidh tú 'you will light'  
caithfidh tú 'you will spend'  
ólfaidh tú 'you will drink'

### Conditional

d'ólfaidís 'they would drink'  
d'fhásfaidís 'they would grow'

### Conditional Autonomous

lasfaí é 'it would be lit'  
chaithfí é 'it would be spent'  
d'ólfaí é 'it would be drunk'  
d'fhásfaí é 'it would be grown'

### Conditional

ní lasfainn 'I would not light'  
ní chaithfinn 'I would not spend'  
ní ólfainn 'I would not drink'  
ní fhásfainn 'I would not grow'

ní lasfá 'you would not light'  
ní chaithfeá 'you would not spend'  
ní ólfá 'you would not drink'  
ní fhásfá 'you would not grow'

ní lasfadh sí/sibh  
'she/you would not light'  
ní chaithfeadh sí/sibh  
'she/you would not spend'  
ní ólfadh sí/sibh  
'she/you would not drink'  
ní fhásfadh sí/sibh  
'she/you would not grow'

ní lasfaimis 'we would not light'  
ní chaithfimis 'we would not spend'  
ní ólfaimis 'we would not drink'  
ní fhásfaimis 'we would not grow'

ní lasfaidís 'they would not light'  
ní chaithfidís 'they would not spend'  
ní ólfaidís 'they would not drink'  
ní fhásfaidís 'they would not grow'

### Conditional Autonomous

ní lasfaí é 'it would not be lit'  
ní chaithfí é 'it would not be spent'  
ní ólfaí é 'it would not be drunk'  
ní fhásfaí é 'it would not be grown'

#### Negative

ní lasfaidh tú 'you will not light'  
ní chaithfidh tú 'you will not spend'  
ní ólfaidh tú 'you will not drink'

### Future

#### Affirmative

fásfaidh tú 'you will grow'

lasfaimid 'we will light'  
caithfimid 'we will spend'  
ólfaimid 'we will drink'  
fásfaimid 'we will grow'

lasfar é 'it will be lit'  
caithfear é 'it will be spent'  
ólfar é 'it will be drunk'  
fásfar é 'it will be grown'

#### Negative

ní fhásfaidh tú 'you will not grow'

ní lasfaimid 'we will not light'  
ní chaithfimid 'we will not spend'  
ní ólfaimid 'we will not drink'  
ní fhásfaimid 'we will not grow'

ní lasfar é 'it will not be lit'  
ní chaithfear é 'it will not be spent'  
ní ólfar é 'it will not be drunk'  
ní fhásfar é 'it will not be grown'

## Regular Verbs: Monosyllabics with Final -igh

The following types of verbs should be studied in pairs because the members of each pair conjugate in essentially the same way.<sup>19</sup>

Monosyllabic Verb with One or Fewer Short Vowels + **-AIGH**: **buaigh** 'win'

Monosyllabic Verb with Long Slender Vowel + **-IGH**: **éigh** 'scream'

Monosyllabic Verb with One or Fewer Short Vowels + **-IGH**: **figh** 'weave'

Monosyllabic Verb with Final -IGH: **maigh** 'boast'

Monosyllabic Verb with Long Broad Vowel + **-IGH**: **báigh** 'drown'

Monosyllabic Verb with Final -EOIGH:<sup>20</sup> **reoigh** 'freeze'

### Present

#### Affirmative

buaim 'I win'  
éim 'I scream'  
fim 'I weave'  
maím 'I boast'  
báim<sup>21</sup> 'I drown'  
reoim 'I freeze'

buann tú 'you win'  
éann tú 'you scream'  
fionn tú 'you weave'  
maíonn tú 'you boast'  
bánn tú 'you drown'  
reonn tú 'you freeze'

buaimid 'we win'  
éimid 'we scream'  
fimid 'we weave'  
maímid 'we boast'  
báimid 'we drown'  
reimid 'we freeze'

buaitear é 'it is won'  
éitear é 'it is screamed'

### Past

bhuaigh mé 'I won'  
d'éigh mé 'I screamed'  
d'fhigh mé 'I wove'  
mhaígh mé 'I boasted'  
bháigh mé 'I drowned'  
reoigh mé 'I froze'

bhuaigh tú 'you won'  
d'éigh tú 'you screamed'  
d'fhigh tú 'you wove'  
mhaígh tú 'you boasted'  
bháigh tú 'you drowned'  
reoigh tú 'you froze'

bhuamar 'we won'  
d'éamar 'we screamed'  
d'fhiomar 'we wove'  
mhaíomar 'we boasted'  
bhámar 'we drowned'  
reomar 'we froze'

buadh é 'it was won'  
éadh é 'it was screamed'

*Present*

**Affirmative** fitear<sup>22</sup> é 'it is woven'  
maítear é 'it is boasted'  
báitear é 'it is drowned'  
reoitear é 'it is frozen'

*Present*

**Negative** ní bhuaim 'I do not win'  
ní éim 'I do not scream'  
ní fhím 'I do not weave'  
ní mhaím 'I do not boast'  
ní bháim 'I do not drown'  
ní reoim 'I do not freeze'

ní bhuanntú 'you do not win'  
ní éanntú 'you do not scream'  
ní fhíonnntú 'you do not weave'  
ní mhaíonnntú 'you do not boast'  
ní bhánnntú 'you do not drown'  
ní reonnntú 'you do not freeze'

ní bhuaimid 'we do not win'  
ní éimid 'we do not scream'  
ní fhíimid 'we do not weave'  
ní mhaíimid 'we do not boast'  
ní bháimid 'we do not drown'  
ní reoimid 'we do not freeze'

ní bhuaitear é 'it is not won'  
ní éitear é 'it is not screamed'  
ní fhitear é 'it is not woven'  
ní mhaítear é 'it is not boasted'  
ní bháitear é 'it is not drowned'  
ní reoitear é 'it is not frozen'

*Imperfect*

**Affirmative** bhuaínn 'I used to win'  
d'éínn 'I used to scream'  
d'fhínn 'I used to weave'  
mhaínn 'I used to boast'  
bháínn 'I used to drown'  
reoínn 'I used to freeze'

bhuaíteá 'you used to win'  
d'éíteá 'you used to scream'  
d'fhíteá<sup>24</sup> 'you used to weave'  
mhaíteá 'you used to boast'  
bháíteá 'you used to drown'  
reoíteá 'you used to freeze'

bhuadh sí/sibh 'she/you used to win'

d'éadh sí/sibh 'she/you used to scream'

*Past*

fíodh é 'it was woven'  
maíodh é 'it was boasted'  
bádh é 'it was drowned'  
reodh é 'it was frozen'

*Past*

níor bhuaigh mé 'I did not win'  
níor éigh mé 'I did not scream'  
níor fhigh mé 'I did not weave'  
níor mhaígh mé 'I did not boast'  
níor bháigh mé 'I did not drown'  
níor reoigh mé 'I did not freeze'

níor bhuaigh tú 'you did not win'  
níor éigh tú 'you did not scream'  
níor fhigh tú 'you did not weave'  
níor mhaígh tú 'you did not boast'  
níor bháigh tú 'you did not drown'  
níor reoigh tú 'you did not freeze'

níor bhuaamar 'we did not win'  
níor éamar 'we did not scream'  
níor fhiomar 'we did not weave'  
níor mhaíomar 'we did not boast'  
níor bhámar 'we did not drown'  
níor reomar 'we did not freeze'

níor buadh<sup>23</sup> é 'it was not won'  
níor éadh é 'it was not screamed'  
níor fíodh é 'it was not woven'  
níor maíodh é 'it was not boasted'  
níor bádh é 'it was not drowned'  
níor reodh é 'it was not frozen'

*Conditional*

bhuaínn 'I would win'  
d'éifinn 'I would scream'  
d'fhínn 'I would weave'  
mhaínn 'I would boast'  
bháínn 'I would drown'  
reoínn 'I would freeze'

bhuaínn 'you would win'  
d'éifeá 'you would scream'  
d'fhínn 'you would weave'  
mhaínn 'you would boast'  
bháínn 'you would drown'  
reoínn 'you would freeze'

bhuafadh sí/sibh 'you would win'

d'éifeadh sí/sibh 'she/you would scream'

*Imperfect*

**Affirmative** d'fhíodh sí/sibh 'she/you used to weave'  
mhaíodh sí/sibh 'she/you used to boast'  
bhádh sí/sibh 'she/you used to drown'  
reodh sí/sibh 'she/you used to freeze'

bhuaímis 'we used to win'  
d'éimis 'we used to scream'  
d'fhímis 'we used to weave'  
mhaímis 'we used to boast'  
bháimis 'we used to drown'  
reoimis 'we used to freeze'

bhuaidís 'they used to win'  
d'éidís 'they used to scream'  
d'fhídís 'they used to weave'  
mhaídís 'they used to boast'  
bháidís 'they used to drown'  
reoidís 'they used to freeze'

*Imperfect Autonomous*

bhuaítí é 'it used to be won'  
d'éítí é 'it used to be screamed'  
d'fhítí é 'it used to be woven'  
mhaítí é 'it used to be boasted'  
bháití é 'it used to be drowned'  
reoití é 'it used to be frozen'

*Imperfect*

**Negative** ní bhuaínn 'I used not win'  
ní éínn 'I used not scream'  
ní fhínn 'I used not weave'  
ní mhaínn 'I used not boast'  
ní bháínn 'I used not drown'  
ní reoínn 'I used not freeze'

ní bhuaíteá 'you used not win'  
ní éíteá 'you used not scream'  
ní fhíteá 'you used not weave'  
ní mhaíteá 'you used not boast'  
ní bháíteá 'you used not drown'  
ní reoíteá 'you used not freeze'

ní bhuaadh sí/sibh 'she/you used not win'  
ní éadh sí/sibh 'she/you used not scream'  
ní fhíodh sí/sibh 'she/you used not weave'  
ní mhaíodh sí/sibh 'she/you used not boast'

ní bhádh sí/sibh 'she/you used not drown'

*Conditional*

d'fhífeadh sí/sibh 'she/you would weave'  
mhaífeadh sí/sibh 'she/you would boast'  
bháfeadh sí/sibh 'she/you would drown'  
reofadh sí/sibh 'she/you would freeze'

bhuaímis 'we would win'  
d'éifimis 'we would scream'  
d'fhímis 'we would weave'  
mhaímis 'we would boast'  
bháimis 'we would drown'  
reoímis 'we would freeze'

bhuaídis 'they would win'  
d'éifidís 'they would scream'  
d'fhífidís 'they would weave'  
mhaífidís 'they would boast'  
bháfidís 'they would drown'  
reofaidís 'they would freeze'

*Conditional Autonomous*

bhuaífeá é 'it would be won'  
d'éifeí é 'it would be screamed'  
d'fhífeá é 'it would be woven'  
mhaífeá é 'it would be boasted'  
bháfeá é 'it would be drowned'  
reofaí é 'it would be frozen'

*Conditional*

ní bhuaínn 'I would not win'  
ní éifinn 'I would not scream'  
ní fhínn 'I would not weave'  
ní mhaínn 'I would not boast'  
ní bháínn 'I would not drown'  
ní reofainn 'I would not freeze'

ní bhuaífeá 'you would not win'  
ní éifeá 'you would not scream'  
ní fhífeá 'you would not weave'  
ní mhaífeá 'you would not boast'  
ní bháfeá 'you would not drown'  
ní reofaí 'you would not freeze'

ní bhuaífeadh sí/sibh 'you would not win'  
ní éifeadh sí/sibh 'she/you would not scream'  
ní fhífeadh sí/sibh 'she/you would not weave'  
ní mhaífeadh sí/sibh 'she/you would not boast'

ní bháfeadh sí/sibh 'she/you would not drown'

### Imperfect

**Negative** ‘she/you used not drown’  
ní reodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used not freeze’

ní bhuaimis ‘we used not win’  
ní éimis ‘we used not scream’  
ní fhímis ‘we used not weave’  
ní mhaímis ‘we used not boast’  
ní bháimis ‘we used not drown’  
ní reoimis ‘we used not freeze’

ní bhuidís ‘they used not win’  
ní éidís ‘they used not scream’  
ní fhídís ‘they used not weave’  
ní mhaídís ‘they used not boast’  
ní bháidís ‘they used not drown’  
ní reoidís ‘they used not freeze’

### Imperfect Autonomous

ní bhuaítí é ‘it used not be won’  
ní éití é ‘it used not be screamed’  
ní fhití é ‘it used not be woven’  
ní mhaítí é ‘it used not be boasted’  
ní bháití é ‘it used not be drowned’  
ní reoití é ‘it used not be frozen’

### Future

#### Affirmative

buafaidh tú ‘you will win’  
éifidh tú ‘you will scream’  
fífidh tú ‘you will weave’  
maífidh tú ‘you will boast’  
báfaidh tú ‘you will drown’  
reofaidh tú ‘you will freeze’

buafaimid ‘we will win’  
éifimid ‘we will scream’  
fífidimid ‘we will weave’  
maífidimid ‘we will boast’  
báfaimid ‘we will drown’  
reofaimid ‘we will freeze’

buafar é ‘it will be won’  
éifear é ‘it will be screamed’  
fífear é ‘it will be woven’  
maífear é ‘it will be boasted’  
báfar é ‘it will be drowned’  
reofar é ‘it will be frozen’

### Conditional

‘she/you would not drown’  
ní reofadh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would not freeze’

ní bhuafaimis ‘we would not win’  
ní éifimis ‘we would not scream’  
ní fhífidis ‘we would not weave’  
ní mhaifimis ‘we would not boast’  
ní bháfaimis ‘we would not drown’  
ní reofaimis ‘we would not freeze’

ní bhuafaidís ‘they would not win’  
ní éifidís ‘they would not scream’  
ní fhífidís ‘they would not weave’  
ní mhaifidís ‘they would not boast’  
ní bháfaidís ‘they would not drown’  
ní reofaidís ‘they would not freeze’

### Conditional Autonomous

ní bhuafaí é ‘it would not be won’  
ní éifí é ‘it would not be screamed’  
ní fhífí é ‘it would not be woven’  
ní mhaifí é ‘it would not be boasted’  
ní bháfaí é ‘it would not be drowned’  
ní reofaí é ‘it would not be frozen’

#### Negative

ní bhuafaidh tú ‘you will not win’  
ní éifidh tú ‘you will not scream’  
ní fhífidh tú ‘you will not weave’  
ní mhaifidh tú ‘you will not boast’  
ní bháfaidh tú ‘you will not drown’  
ní reofaidh tú ‘you will not freeze’

ní bhuafaimid ‘we will not win’  
ní éifimid ‘we will not scream’  
ní fhífidimid ‘we will not weave’  
ní mhaifimid ‘we will not boast’  
ní bháfaimid ‘we will not drown’  
ní reofaimid ‘we will not freeze’

ní bhuafar é ‘it will not be won’  
ní éifear é ‘it will not be screamed’  
ní fhífear é ‘it will not be woven’  
ní mhaifear é ‘it will not be boasted’  
ní bháfar é ‘it will not be drowned’  
ní reofar é ‘it will not be frozen’

## Regular Verbs: Polysyllabics with Final -igh

A verb with final **-igh** is polysyllabic *only* if it contains at least one internal consonant.

Polysyllabic Verb with Final -AIGH: **ceannaigh** ‘buy’

Polysyllabic Verb with Final -IGH: **réitigh** ‘settle’

Polysyllabic Verb with Initial Vowel: **aontaigh** ‘agree’

Polysyllabic Verb with Initial ‘F’: **foilsigh** ‘publish’

### Present

**Affirmative** ceannaím ‘I buy’  
réitím ‘I settle’  
aontaím ‘I agree’  
foilsím ‘I publish’

ceannaíonn tú ‘you buy’  
réitíonn tú ‘you settle’  
aontaíonn tú ‘you agree’  
foilsíonn tú ‘you publish’

ceannaímid ‘we buy’  
réitímid ‘we settle’  
aontaímid ‘we agree’  
foilsímid ‘we publish’

ceannaítear é ‘it is bought’  
réitítear é ‘it is settled’  
aontaítear é ‘it is agreed’  
foilsítear é ‘it is published’

### Present

**Negative** ní cheannaím ‘I do not buy’  
ní réitím ‘I do not settle’  
ní aontaím ‘I do not agree’  
ní fhoilsím ‘I do not publish’

ní cheannaíonn tú ‘you do not buy’  
ní réitíonn tú ‘you do not settle’  
ní aontaíonn tú ‘you do not agree’  
ní fhoilsíonn tú ‘you do not publish’

ní cheannaímid ‘we do not buy’  
ní réitímid ‘we do not settle’  
ní aontaímid ‘we do not agree’  
ní fhoilsímid ‘we do not publish’

ní cheannaítear é ‘it is not bought’  
ní réitítear é ‘it is not settled’  
ní aontaítear é ‘it is not agreed’  
ní fhoilsítear é ‘it is not published’

### Past

cheannaigh mé ‘I bought’  
réitigh mé ‘I settled’  
d’aontaigh mé ‘I agreed’  
d’fhoilsigh mé ‘I published’

cheannaigh tú ‘you bought’  
réitigh tú ‘you settled’  
d’aontaigh tú ‘you agreed’  
d’fhoilsigh tú ‘you published’

cheannaíomar ‘we bought’  
réitíomar ‘we settled’  
d’aontaíomar ‘we agreed’  
d’fhoilsíomar ‘we published’

ceannaíodh é ‘it was bought’  
réitíodh é ‘it was settled’  
aontaíodh é ‘it was agreed’  
foilsíodh é ‘it was published’

### Past

níor cheannaigh mé ‘I did not buy’  
níor réitigh mé ‘I did not settle’  
níor aontaigh mé ‘I did not agree’  
níor fhoilsigh mé ‘I did not publish’

níor cheannaigh tú ‘you did not buy’  
níor réitigh tú ‘you did not settle’  
níor aontaigh tú ‘you did not agree’  
níor fhoilsigh tú ‘you did not publish’

níor cheannaíomar ‘we did not buy’  
níor réitíomar ‘we did not settle’  
níor aontaíomar ‘we did not agree’  
níor fhoilsíomar ‘we did not publish’

níor ceannaíodh<sup>25</sup> é ‘it was not bought’  
níor réitíodh é ‘it was not settled’  
níor aontaíodh é ‘it was not agreed’  
níor foilsíodh é ‘it was not published’

### Imperfect

**Affirmative** cheannainn ‘I used to buy’  
réitinn ‘I used to settle’  
d’aontainn ‘I used to agree’  
d’fhoilsinn ‘I used to publish’

cheannaíteá ‘you used to buy’  
réitíteá ‘you used to settle’  
d’aontaíteá ‘you used to agree’  
d’fhoilsíteá ‘you used to grow’

cheannaíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to buy’  
réitíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to settle’  
d’aontaíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to agree’  
d’fhoilsíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to publish’

cheannaímis ‘we used to buy’  
réitímis ‘we used to settle’  
d’aontaímis ‘we used to agree’  
d’fhoilsímis ‘we used to publish’

cheannaidís ‘they used to buy’  
réitídís ‘they used to settle’  
d’aontaidís ‘they used to agree’  
d’fhoilsídís ‘they used to publish’

### Imperfect Autonomous

cheannaí é ‘it used to be bought’  
réití é ‘it used to be settled’  
d’aontaí é ‘it used to be agreed’  
d’fhoilsí é ‘it used to be published’

### Imperfect

**Negative** ní cheannainn ‘I used not buy’  
ní réitinn ‘I used not settle’  
ní aontainn ‘I used not agree’  
ní fhoilsinn ‘I used not publish’

ní cheannaíteá ‘you used not buy’  
ní réitíteá ‘you used not settle’  
ní aontaíteá ‘you used not agree’  
ní fhoilsíteá ‘you used not publish’

ní cheannaíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used not buy’  
ní réitíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used not settle’  
ní aontaíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used not agree’

### Conditional

cheannóinn ‘I would buy’  
réiteoinn ‘I would settle’  
d’aontóinn ‘I would agree’  
d’fhoilseoinn ‘I would publish’

cheannófá ‘you would buy’  
réiteofá ‘you would settle’  
d’aontófá ‘you would agree’  
d’fhoilseofá ‘you would publish’

cheannódh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would buy’  
réiteodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would settle’  
d’aontódh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would agree’  
d’fhoilseodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would publish’

cheannóimis ‘we would buy’  
réiteoimis ‘we would settle’  
d’aontóimis ‘we would agree’  
d’fhoilseoimis ‘we would publish’

cheannóidís ‘they would buy’  
réiteoidís ‘they would settle’  
d’aontóidís ‘they would agree’  
d’fhoilseoidís ‘they would publish’

### Conditional Autonomous

cheannófaí é ‘it would be bought’  
réiteofaí é ‘it would be settled’  
d’aontófaí é ‘it would be agreed’  
d’fhoilseofaí é ‘it would be published’

### Conditional

ní cheannóinn ‘I would not buy’  
ní réiteoinn ‘I would not settle’  
ní aontóinn ‘I would not agree’  
ní fhoilseoinn ‘I would not publish’

ní cheannófá ‘you would not buy’  
ní réiteofá ‘you would not settle’  
ní aontófá ‘you would not agree’  
ní fhoilseofá ‘you would not publish’

ní cheannódh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would not buy’  
ní réiteodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would not settle’  
ní aontódh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would not agree’

### Imperfect

**Negative** ní fhoilsíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used not publish’

ní cheannaímis ‘we used not buy’  
ní réitímis ‘we used not settle’  
ní aontaímis ‘we used not agree’  
ní fhoilsímis ‘we used not publish’

ní cheannaidís ‘they used not buy’  
ní réitídís ‘they used not settle’  
ní aontaidís ‘they used not agree’  
ní fhoilsídís ‘they used not publish’

**Imperfect Autonomous**

ní cheannaí é ‘it used not be bought’  
ní réití é ‘it used not be settled’  
ní aontaí é ‘it used not be agreed’  
ní fhoilsí é ‘it used not be published’

### Future

#### Affirmative

ceannóidh tú ‘you will buy’  
réiteoidh tú ‘you will settle’  
aontóidh tú ‘you will agree’  
foilseoidh tú ‘you will publish’

ceannóimid ‘we will buy’  
réiteimid ‘we will settle’  
aontóimid ‘we will agree’  
foilseoimid ‘we will publish’

ceannófar é ‘it will be bought’  
réiteofar é ‘it will be settled’  
aontófar é ‘it will be agreed’  
foilseofar é ‘it will be published’

### Conditional

ní fhoilseodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would not publish’

ní cheannóimis ‘we would not buy’  
ní réiteoimis ‘we would not settle’  
ní aontóimis ‘we would not agree’  
ní fhoilseoimis ‘we would not publish’

ní cheannóidís ‘they would not buy’  
ní réiteoidís ‘they would not settle’  
ní aontóidís ‘they would not agree’  
ní fhoilseoidís ‘they would not publish’

**Conditional Autonomous**

ní cheannófaí é ‘it would not be bought’  
ní réiteofaí é ‘it would not be settled’  
ní aontófaí é ‘it would not be agreed’  
ní fhoilseofaí é ‘it would not be published’

#### Negative

ní cheannóidh tú ‘you will not buy’  
ní réiteoidh tú ‘you will not settle’  
ní aontóidh tú ‘you will not agree’  
ní fhoilseoidh tú ‘you will not publish’

ní cheannóimid ‘we will not buy’  
ní réiteoimid ‘we will not settle’  
ní aontóimid ‘we will not agree’  
ní fhoilseoimid ‘we will not publish’

ní cheannófar é ‘it will not be bought’  
ní réiteofar é ‘it will not be settled’  
ní aontófar é ‘it will not be agreed’  
ní fhoilseofar é ‘it will not be published’

## Regular Verbs: Polysyllabics with Final -il, -in, -is, -aim, or -aing

Verbs do *not* syncope if removing the vowels between the final two consonants would create an unpronounceable cluster of consonants. It is easy to say *músclaíonn* (from *múscail* ‘awaken’) or *aithníonn* (from *aithin* ‘recognize’), but it is death by tongue-twisting to try to say *aithrisíonn* (from *aithris* ‘narrate’) or *foghlaíonn* (from *foghlaim* ‘learn’), so the actual forms are *aithrisíonn* and *foghlaimíonn*.

Polysyllabic Verb with Long Vowel + **-IL**: **robáil**<sup>26</sup> ‘rob’

Polysyllabic Verb with Long Vowel + **-IN**: **taispeáin**<sup>27</sup> ‘show’

Polysyllabic Verb with Final -IS: **aithris** ‘narrate’



Polysyllabic Verb with Final **-AIM**: foghlaim ‘learn’

Polysyllabic Verb with Final **-AING**: tarraing ‘pull’

*Present*

**Affirmative** robálaim ‘I rob’  
taispeánaim ‘I show’  
aithrisím ‘I narrate’  
foghlaimím ‘I learn’  
tarraingím ‘I pull’

robálann tú ‘you rob’  
taispeánann tú ‘you show’  
aithrisíonn tú ‘you narrate’  
foghlaimíonn tú ‘you learn’  
tarraingíonn tú ‘you pull’

robálaimid ‘we rob’  
taispeánaimid ‘we show’  
aithrisímid ‘we narrate’  
foghlaimímid ‘we learn’  
tarraingímid ‘we pull’

robáiltear é ‘it is robbed’  
taispeántar é ‘it is shown’  
aithrisítear é ‘it is narrated’  
foghlaimítear é ‘it is learned’  
tarraingítear é ‘it is pulled’

*Present*

**Negative** ní robálaim  
‘I do not rob’  
ní thaispeánaim  
‘I do not show’  
ní aithrisím  
‘I do not narrate’  
ní fhoghlaimím  
‘I do not learn’  
ní tharraingím  
‘I do not pull’

ní robálann tú  
‘you do not rob’  
ní thaispeánann tú  
‘you do not show’  
ní aithrisíonn tú  
‘you do not narrate’  
ní fhoghlaimíonn tú  
‘you do not learn’  
ní tharraingíonn tú  
‘you do not pull’

ní robálaimid

*Past*

robáil mé ‘I robbed’  
thaispeáin mé ‘I showed’  
d’aithris mé ‘I narrated’  
d’fhoghlaim mé ‘I learned’  
tharraing mé ‘I pulled’

robáil tú ‘you robbed’  
thaispeáin tú ‘you showed’  
d’aithris tú ‘you narrated’  
d’fhoghlaim tú ‘you learned’  
tharraing tú ‘you pulled’

robálamar ‘we robbed’  
thaispeánamar ‘we showed’  
d’aithrisíomar ‘we narrated’  
d’fhoghlaimíomar ‘we learned’  
tharraingíomar ‘we pulled’

robáladh é ‘it was robbed’  
taispeánadh é ‘it was shown’  
aithrisíodh é ‘it was narrated’  
foghlaimíodh é ‘it was learned’  
tarraingíodh é ‘it was pulled’

*Past*

níor robáil mé  
‘I did not rob’  
níor thaispeáin mé  
‘I did not show’  
níor aithris mé  
‘I did not narrate’  
níor fhoghlaim mé  
‘I did not learn’  
níor tharraing mé  
‘I did not pull’

níor robáil tú  
‘you did not rob’  
níor thaispeáin tú  
‘you did not show’  
níor aithris tú  
‘you did not narrate’  
níor fhoghlaim tú  
‘you did not learn’  
níor tharraing tú  
‘you did not pull’

níor robálamar

*Present*

**Negative** ‘we do not rob’  
ní thaispeánaimid  
‘we do not show’  
ní aithrisímid  
‘we do not narrate’  
ní fhoghlaimímid  
‘we do not learn’  
ní tharraingímid  
‘we do not pull’

ní robáiltear é  
‘it is not robbed’  
ní thaispeántar é  
‘it is not shown’  
ní aithrisítear é  
‘it is not narrated’  
ní fhoghlaimítear é  
‘it is not learned’  
ní tharraingítear é  
‘it is not pulled’

*Imperfect*

**Affirmative** robálainn ‘I used to rob’  
thaispeánainn ‘I used to show’  
d’aithrisínn ‘I used to narrate’  
d’fhoghlaimínn ‘I used to learn’  
tharraingínn ‘I used to pull’

robáilteá ‘you used to rob’  
thaispeántá ‘you used to show’  
d’aithrisíteá ‘you used to narrate’  
d’fhoghlaimíteá ‘you used to learn’  
tharraingíteá ‘you used to pull’

robáladh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to rob’  
thaispeánadh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to show’  
d’aithrisíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to narrate’  
d’fhoghlaimíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to learn’  
tharraingíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to pull’

robálaimis ‘we used to rob’  
thaispeánaimis ‘we used to show’  
d’aithrisímis ‘we used to narrate’  
d’fhoghlaimímis ‘we used to learn’  
tharraingímis ‘we used to pull’

*Past*

‘we did not rob’  
níor thaispeánamar  
‘we did not show’  
níor aithrisíomar  
‘we did not narrate’  
níor fhoghlaimíomar  
‘we did not learn’  
níor tharraingíomar  
‘we did not pull’

níor robáladh é  
‘it was not robbed’  
níor taispeánadh<sup>28</sup> é  
‘it was not shown’  
níor aithrisíodh é  
‘it was not narrated’  
níor foghlaimíodh é  
‘it was not learned’  
níor tarraingíodh é  
‘it was not pulled’

*Conditional*

robálfainn ‘I would rob’  
thaispeánfainn ‘I would show’  
d’aithriseoinn ‘I would narrate’  
d’fhoghlaiméoinn ‘I would learn’  
tharraingeoinn ‘I would pull’

robálfá ‘you would rob’  
thaispeánfá ‘you would show’  
d’aithriseofá ‘you would narrate’  
d’fhoghlaiméofá ‘you would learn’  
tharraingeofá ‘you would pull’

robálfadh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would rob’  
thaispeánfadh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would show’  
d’aithriseodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would narrate’  
d’fhoghlaiméodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would learn’  
tharraingeodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would pull’

robálfaimis ‘we would rob’  
thaispeánfaimis ‘we would show’  
d’aithriseoimis ‘we would narrate’  
d’fhoghlaiméoimis ‘we would learn’  
tharraingeoimis ‘we would pull’

### Imperfect

**Affirmative** robálaídis ‘they used to rob’  
 thaispeánaídis ‘they used to show’  
 d’aithrisídis ‘they used to narrate’  
 d’fhoghlaimídis ‘they used to learn’  
 tharraingídis ‘they used to pull’

### Imperfect Autonomous

robáiltí é ‘it used to be robbed’  
 thaispeántaí é ‘it used to be shown’  
 d’aithrisítí é ‘it used to be narrated’  
 d’fhoghlaimítí é ‘it used to be learned’  
 tharraingítí é ‘it used to be pulled’

### Imperfect

**Negative** ní robálainn ‘I used not rob’  
 ní thaispeánainn ‘I used not show’  
 ní aithrisínn ‘I used not narrate’  
 ní fhoghlaimínn ‘I used not learn’  
 ní tharraingínn ‘I used not pull’

ní robáilteá ‘you used not rob’  
 ní thaispeántá ‘you used not show’  
 ní aithrisíteá ‘you used not narrate’  
 ní fhoghlaimíteá ‘you used not learn’  
 ní tharraingíteá ‘you used not pull’

ní robáladh sí/sibh ‘she/you used not rob’  
 ní thaispeánadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used not show’  
 ní aithrisíodh sí/sibh ‘she/you used not narrate’  
 ní fhoghlaimíodh sí/sibh ‘she/you used not learn’  
 ní tharraingíodh sí/sibh ‘she/you used not pull’

ní robálaímis ‘we used not rob’  
 ní thaispeánaímis ‘we used not show’  
 ní aithrisímis ‘we used not narrate’  
 ní fhoghlaimímis ‘we used not learn’  
 ní tharraingímis ‘we used not pull’

ní robálaídis ‘they used not rob’  
 ní thaispeánaídis ‘they used not show’  
 ní aithrisídis ‘they used not narrate’  
 ní fhoghlaimídis ‘they used not learn’  
 ní tharraingídis ‘they used not pull’

### Conditional

robálfaidís ‘they would rob’  
 thaispeánfaidís ‘they would show’  
 d’aithriseoidís ‘they would narrate’  
 d’fhoghlaimídis ‘they would learn’  
 tharraingeoidís ‘they would pull’

### Conditional Autonomous

robálfai é ‘it would be robbed’  
 thaispeánfaí é ‘it would be shown’  
 d’aithriseofaí é ‘it would be narrated’  
 d’fhoghlaimíofaí é ‘it would be learned’  
 tharraingeofaí é ‘it would be pulled’

### Conditional

ní robálfainn ‘I would not rob’  
 ní thaispeánfainn ‘I would not show’  
 ní aithriseoinn ‘I would not narrate’  
 ní fhoghlaimíoinn ‘I would not learn’  
 ní tharraingeoinn ‘I would not pull’

ní robálfá ‘you would not rob’  
 ní thaispeánfá ‘you would not show’  
 ní aithriseofá ‘you would not narrate’  
 ní fhoghlaimíofá ‘you would not learn’  
 ní tharraingeofá ‘you would not pull’

ní robálfadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would not rob’  
 ní thaispeánfadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would not show’  
 ní aithriseodh sí/sibh ‘she/you would not narrate’  
 ní fhoghlaimíodh sí/sibh ‘she/you would not learn’  
 ní tharraingeodh sí/sibh ‘she/you would not pull’

ní robálfaimis ‘we would not rob’  
 ní thaispeánfaimis ‘we would not show’  
 ní aithriseoimis ‘we would not narrate’  
 ní fhoghlaimíois ‘we would not learn’  
 ní tharraingeoimis ‘we would not pull’

ní robálfaidís ‘they would not rob’  
 ní thaispeánfaidís ‘they would not show’  
 ní aithriseoidís ‘they would not narrate’  
 ní fhoghlaimíoidís ‘they would not learn’  
 ní tharraingeoidís ‘they would not pull’

### Imperfect Autonomous

ní robáiltí é ‘it used not be robbed’  
 ní thaispeántaí é ‘it used not be shown’  
 ní aithrisítí é ‘it used not be narrated’  
 ní fhoghlaimítí é ‘it used not be learned’  
 ní tharraingítí é ‘it used not be pulled’

### Future

#### Affirmative

robálfaidh tú ‘you will rob’  
 taispeánfaidh tú ‘you will show’  
 aithriseoidh tú ‘you will narrate’  
 foghlaimíodh tú ‘you will learn’  
 tarraingeoidh tú ‘you will pull’

robálfaimid ‘we will rob’  
 taispeánfaimid ‘we will show’  
 aithriseoimid ‘we will narrate’  
 foghlaimíimid ‘we will learn’  
 tarraingeoimid ‘we will pull’

robálfar é ‘it will be robbed’  
 taispeánfar é ‘it will be shown’  
 aithriseofar é ‘it will be narrated’  
 foghlaimíofar é ‘it will be learned’  
 tarraingeofar é ‘it will be pulled’

### Conditional Autonomous

ní robálfai é ‘it would not be robbed’  
 ní thaispeánfaí é ‘it would not be shown’  
 ní aithriseofaí é ‘it would not be narrated’  
 ní fhoghlaimíofaí é ‘it would not be learned’  
 ní tharraingeofaí é ‘it would not be pulled’

#### Negative

ní robálfaidh tú ‘you will not rob’  
 ní thaispeánfaidh tú ‘you will not show’  
 ní aithriseoidh tú ‘you will not narrate’  
 ní fhoghlaimíodh tú ‘you will not learn’  
 ní tharraingeoidh tú ‘you will not pull’

ní robálfaimid ‘we will not rob’  
 ní thaispeánfaimid ‘we will not show’  
 ní aithriseoimid ‘we will not narrate’  
 ní fhoghlaimíimid ‘we will not learn’  
 ní tharraingeoimid ‘we will not pull’

ní robálfar é ‘it will not be robbed’  
 ní thaispeánfar é ‘it will not be shown’  
 ní aithriseofar é ‘it will not be narrated’  
 ní fhoghlaimíofar é ‘it will not be learned’  
 ní tharraingeofar é ‘it will not be pulled’

## Regular Verbs: Syncopating Polysyllabics with Final -il, -in, -ir, or -is

The syncopated root is used in all persons, numbers, tenses and moods *except* the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg., and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> p. pl. in the past tense. Note that a **polysyllabic verb cannot syncopate if its final syllable contains a long vowel**. If a long vowel precedes the -il, -in, -ir, or -is, the verb conjugates like *robáil* and *taispeáin* (see *Regular Verbs: Polysyllabics with Final -il, -in, -is, -aim, or -aing*).

Syncopating Verb with **Final -IL**: **múscail** ‘awaken’

Syncopating Verb with **Final -IN**: **aithin** ‘recognize’

Syncopating Verb with **Final -IR**: **fógair** ‘declare’

Syncopating Verb with **Final -IS**: **inis** ‘tell’

### Present

**Affirmative** músclaím ‘I awaken’  
 aithním ‘I recognize’  
 fógraím ‘I declare’  
 insím ‘I tell’

músclaíonn tú ‘you awaken’  
 aithníonn tú ‘you recognize’

### Past

mhúscail mé ‘I awakened’  
 d’aithin mé ‘I recognized’  
 d’fhógair mé ‘I declared’  
 d’inis mé ‘I told’

mhúscail tú ‘you awakened’  
 d’aithin tú ‘you recognized’

*Present*

**Affirmative** fógraíonn tú ‘you declare’  
insíonn tú ‘you tell’

músclaímid ‘we awaken’  
aithnímid ‘we recognize’  
fógraímid ‘we declare’  
insímid ‘we tell’

músclaítear é ‘it is awakened’  
aithnítear é ‘it is recognized’  
fógraítear é ‘it is declared’  
insítear é ‘it is told’

**Negative** ní mhúsclaím  
‘I do not awaken’  
ní aithním  
‘I do not recognize’  
ní fhógraím  
‘I do not declare’  
ní insím  
‘I do not tell’

ní mhúsclaíonn tú  
‘you do not awaken’  
ní aithníonn tú  
‘you do not recognize’  
ní fhógraíonn tú  
‘you do not declare’  
ní insíonn tú  
‘you do not tell’

ní mhúsclaímid  
‘we do not awaken’  
ní aithnímid  
‘we do not recognize’  
ní fhógraímid  
‘we do not declare’  
ní insímid  
‘we do not tell’

ní mhúsclaítear é  
‘it is not awakened’  
ní aithnítear é  
‘it is not recognized’  
ní fhógraítear é  
‘it is not declared’  
ní insítear é  
‘it is not told’

*Past*

d’fhógair tú ‘you declared’  
d’inis tú ‘you told’

mhúsclaíomar ‘we awakened’  
d’aithníomar ‘we recognized’  
d’fhógraíomar ‘we declared’  
d’insíomar ‘we told’

músclaíodh é ‘it was awakened’  
aithníodh é ‘it was recognized’  
fógraíodh é ‘it was declared’  
insíodh é ‘it was told’

níor mhúscaíl mé  
‘I did not awaken’  
níor aithin mé  
‘I did not recognize’  
níor fhógair mé  
‘I did not declare’  
níor inis mé  
‘I did not tell’

níor mhúscaíl tú  
‘you did not awaken’  
níor aithin tú  
‘you did not recognize’  
níor fhógair tú  
‘you did not declare’  
níor inis tú  
‘you did not tell’

níor mhúsclaíomar  
‘we did not awaken’  
níor aithníomar  
‘we did not recognize’  
níor fhógraíomar  
‘we did not declare’  
níor insíomar  
‘we did not tell’

níor músclaíodh<sup>29</sup> é  
‘it was not awakened’  
níor aithníodh é  
‘it was not recognized’  
níor fógraíodh é  
‘it was not declared’  
níor insíodh é  
‘it was not told’

*Imperfect*

**Affirmative** mhúsclaínn ‘I used to awaken’  
d’aithnínn ‘I used to recognize’  
d’fhógraínn ‘I used to declare’  
d’insínn ‘I used to tell’

mhúsclaíteá ‘you used to awaken’  
d’aithníteá ‘you used to recognize’  
d’fhógraíteá ‘you used to declare’  
d’insíteá ‘you used to tell’

mhúsclaíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to awaken’  
d’aithníodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to recognize’  
d’fhógraíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to declare’  
d’insíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used to tell’

mhúsclaímis ‘we used to awaken’  
d’aithnímis ‘we used to recognize’  
d’fhógraímis ‘we used to declare’  
d’insímis ‘we used to tell’

mhúsclaídís ‘they used to awaken’  
d’aithnidís ‘they used to recognize’  
d’fhógraídís ‘they used to declare’  
d’insídís ‘they used to tell’

*Imperfect Autonomous*

mhúsclaítí é ‘it used to be awakened’  
d’aithnítí é ‘it used to be recognized’  
d’fhógraítí é ‘it used to be declared’  
d’insítí é ‘it used to be told’

*Imperfect*

**Negative** ní mhúsclaínn ‘I used not awaken’  
ní aithnínn ‘I used not recognize’  
ní fhógraínn ‘I used not declare’  
ní insínn ‘I used not tell’

ní mhúsclaíteá ‘you used not awaken’  
ní aithníteá ‘you used not recognize’  
ní fhógraíteá ‘you used not declare’  
ní insíteá ‘you used not tell’

ní mhúsclaíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used not awaken’  
ní aithníodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used not recognize’  
ní fhógraíodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you used not declare’

*Conditional*

mhúsclóinn ‘I would awaken’  
d’aithneoinn ‘I would recognize’  
d’fhógróinn ‘I would declare’  
d’inseoinn ‘I would tell’

mhúsclófá ‘you would awaken’  
d’aithneofá ‘you would recognize’  
d’fhógrófá ‘you would declare’  
d’inseofá ‘you would tell’

mhúsclódh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would awaken’  
d’aithneodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would recognize’  
d’fhógródh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would declare’  
d’inseodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would tell’

mhúsclóimis ‘we would awaken’  
d’aithneois ‘we would recognize’  
d’fhógróimis ‘we would declare’  
d’inseois ‘we would tell’

mhúsclóidís ‘they would awaken’  
d’aithneoidís ‘they would recognize’  
d’fhógróidís ‘they would declare’  
d’inseoidís ‘they would tell’

*Conditional Autonomous*

mhúsclófaí é ‘it would be awakened’  
d’aithneofaí é ‘it would be recognized’  
d’fhógrófaí é ‘it would be declared’  
d’inseofaí é ‘it would be told’

*Conditional*

ní mhúsclóinn ‘I would not awaken’  
ní aithneoinn ‘I would not recognize’  
ní fhógróinn ‘I would not declare’  
ní inseoinn ‘I would not tell’

ní mhúsclófá ‘you would not awaken’  
ní aithneofá ‘you would not recognize’  
ní fhógrófá ‘you would not declare’  
ní inseofá ‘you would not tell’

ní mhúsclódh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would not awaken’  
ní aithneodh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would not recognize’  
ní fhógródh sí/sibh  
‘she/you would not declare’

	<i>Imperfect</i>	<i>Conditional</i>
<b>Negative</b>	ní insíodh sí/sibh 'she/you used not tell'	ní inseodh sí/sibh 'she/you would not tell'
	ní mhúsclaímis 'we used not awaken' ní aithnímis 'we used not recognize' ní fhógraímis 'we used not declare' ní insímis 'we used not tell'	ní mhúsclóimis 'we would not awaken' ní aithneóimis 'we would not recognize' ní fhógróimis 'we would not declare' ní inseóimis 'we would not tell'
	ní mhúsclaídís 'they used not awaken' ní aithnídís 'they used not recognize' ní fhógraídís 'they used not declare' ní insídís 'they used not tell'	ní mhúsclóidís 'they would not awaken' ní aithneoidís 'they would not recognize' ní fhógróidís 'they would not declare' ní inseoidís 'they would not tell'
	<i>Imperfect Autonomous</i>	<i>Conditional Autonomous</i>
	ní mhúsclaítí é 'it used not be awakened' ní aithnítí é 'it used not be recognized' ní fhógraítí é 'it used not be declared' ní insítí é 'it used not be told'	ní mhúsclófaí é 'it would not be awakened' ní aithneofaí é 'it would not be recognized' ní fhógrófaí é 'it would not be declared' ní inseofaí é 'it would not be told'
	<i>Future</i>	
<b>Affirmative</b>		<b>Negative</b>
	músclóidh tú 'you will awaken' aithneoidh tú 'you will recognize' fógróidh tú 'you will declare' inseoidh tú 'you will tell'	ní mhúsclóidh tú 'you will not awaken' ní aithneoidh tú 'you will not recognize' ní fhógróidh tú 'you will not declare' ní inseoidh tú 'you will not tell'
	músclóimid 'we will awaken' aithneóimid 'we will recognize' fógróimid 'we will declare' inseóimid 'we will tell'	ní mhúsclóimid 'we will not awaken' ní aithneóimid 'we will not recognize' ní fhógróimid 'we will not declare' ní inseóimid 'we will not tell'
	músclófar é 'it will be awakened' aithneofar é 'it will be recognized' fógrófar é 'it will be declared' inseofar é 'it will be told'	ní mhúsclófar é 'it will not be awakened' ní aithneofar é 'it will not be recognized' ní fhógrófar é 'it will not be declared' ní inseofar é 'it will not be told'

## Irregular Verbs: Abair and Tabhair

*Abair* has four additional irregularities:

- 1) the analytic present-tense form is *deir*, without the expected *-eann* ending;
- 2) the initial consonant is not lenited in the conditional and imperfect;
- 3) *ní* does not lenite the initial 'd' in any tense or mood;
- 4) *ní* precedes the past-tense **forms** even though they are independent.

<b>Affirmative</b>	<b>abair</b> 'say'	<b>tabhair</b> 'give'
<i>Present</i>	deirim 'I say' deir tú 'you say' deirimid 'we say' deirtear é 'it is said'	tugaim 'I give' tugann tú 'you give' tugaimid 'we give' tugtar é 'it is given'

<i>Past</i>	dúirt tú 'you said' dúramar 'we said' dúradh é 'it was said'	thug tú 'you gave' thugamar 'we gave' tugadh é 'it was given'
<i>Imperfect</i>	deirinn 'I used to say' deirteá 'you used to say' deireadh sí/sibh 'she/you used to say' deirimis 'we used to say' deiridís 'they used to say' deirtí é 'it used to be said'	thugainn 'I used to give' thugtá 'you used to give' thugadh sí/sibh 'she/you used to give' thugaimis 'we used to give' thugaidís 'they used to give' thugtaí é 'it used to be given'
<i>Conditional</i>	déarfainn 'I would say' déarfá 'you would say' déarfadh sí/sibh 'she/you would say' déarfaimis 'we would say' déarfaidís 'they would say' déarfaí é 'it would be said'	thabharfainn 'I would give' thabharfá 'you would give' thabharfadh sí/sibh 'she/you would give' thabharfaimis 'we would give' thabharfaidís 'they would give' thabharfaí é 'it would be given'
<i>Future</i>	déarfaidh tú 'you will say' déarfaimid 'we will say' déarfar é 'it will be said'	tabharfaidh tú 'you will give' tabharfaimid 'we will give' tabharfar é 'it will be given'
<b>Negative</b>	<b>abair</b> 'say'	<b>tabhair</b> 'give'
<i>Present</i>	ní deirim 'I do not say' ní deir tú 'you do not say' ní deirimid 'we do not say' ní deirtear é 'it is not said'	ní thugaim 'I do not give' ní thugann tú 'you do not give' ní thugaimid 'we do not give' ní thugtar é 'it is not given'
<i>Past</i>	ní dúirt tú 'you did not say' ní dúramar 'we did not say' ní dúradh é 'it was not said'	níor thug tú 'you did not give' níor thugamar 'we did not give' níor tugadh <sup>30</sup> é 'it was not given'
<i>Imperfect</i>	ní deirinn 'I used not say' ní deirteá 'you used not say' ní deireadh sí/sibh 'she/you used not say' ní deirimis 'we used not say' ní deiridís 'they used not say' ní deirtí é 'it used not be said'	ní thugainn 'I used not give' ní thugtá 'you used not give' ní thugadh sí/sibh 'she/you used not give' ní thugaimis 'we used not give' ní thugaidís 'they used not give' ní thugtaí é 'it used not be given'
<i>Conditional</i>	ní déarfainn 'I would not say' ní déarfá 'you would not say' ní déarfadh sí/sibh 'she/you would not say' ní déarfaimis 'we would not say' ní déarfaidís 'they would not say' ní déarfaí é 'it would not be said'	ní thabharfainn 'I would not give' ní thabharfá 'you would not give' ní thabharfadh sí/sibh 'she/you would not give' ní thabharfaimis 'we would not give' ní thabharfaidís 'they would not give' ní thabharfaí é 'it would not be given'
<i>Future</i>	ní déarfaidh tú 'you will not say' ní déarfaimid 'we will not say' ní déarfar é 'it will not be said'	ní thabharfaidh tú 'you will not give' ní thabharfaimid 'we will not give' ní thabharfar é 'it will not be given'



## Irregular Verbs: Faigh and Téigh

*Faigh* has three additional irregularities:

- 1) *ní* lenites the initial 'f' only in the present and the imperfect;
- 2) in the past, future, and conditional, *ní* eclipses the initial 'f'
- 3) *ní* precedes the past-tense forms even though they are independent.

	Affirmative	Negative
	<b>faigh</b> 'get'	
	Independent Forms	Dependent Forms (if any)
<b>Present</b>	faighim 'I get' faigheann tú 'you get' faighimid 'we get' faightear é 'it is gotten'	ní fhaighim 'I do not get' ní fhaigheann tú 'you do not get' ní fhaighimid 'we do not get' ní fhaightear é 'it is not gotten'
<b>Past</b>	fuair tú 'you got' fuaireamar 'we got' fuarthas é 'it was gotten'	ní bhfuair tú 'you did not get' ní bhfuaireamar 'we did not get' ní bhfuarthas é 'it was not gotten'
<b>Imperfect</b>	d'fhaighinn 'I used to get' d'fhaigheá 'you used to get' d'fhaigheadh sí/sibh 'she/you used to get' d'fhaighimis 'we used to get' d'fhaighidís 'they used to get' d'fhaightí é 'it used to be gotten'	ní fhaighinn 'I used not get' ní fhaigheá 'you used not get' ní fhaigheadh sí/sibh 'she/you used not get' ní fhaighimis 'we used not get' ní fhaighidís 'they used not get' ní fhaightí é 'it used not be gotten'
<b>Conditional</b>	gheobhainn 'I would get' gheofá 'you would get' gheobhadh sí/sibh 'she/you would get' gheobhaimis 'we would get' gheobhaidís 'they would get' gheofaí é 'it would be gotten'	ní bhfaighinn 'I would not get' ní bhfaighfeá 'you would not get' ní bhfaigheadh sí/sibh 'she/you would not get' ní bhfaighimis 'we would not get' ní bhfaighidís 'they would not get' ní bhfaighfí é 'it would not be gotten'
<b>Future</b>	gheobhaidh tú 'you will get' gheobhaimid 'we will get' gheofar é 'it will be gotten'	ní bhfaighidh tú 'you will not get' ní bhfaighimid 'we will not get' ní bhfaighfear é 'it will not be gotten'
	<b>téigh</b> 'go'	
	Independent Forms	Dependent Forms (if any)
<b>Present</b>	téim 'I go' téann tú 'you go' téimid 'we go' téitear 'one goes'	ní théim 'I do not go' ní théann tú 'you do not go' ní théimid 'we do not go' ní théitear 'one does not go'
<b>Past</b>	chuaigh tú 'you went' chuamar 'we went' chuathas 'one went'	ní dheachaigh tú 'you did not go' ní dheachamar 'we did not go' ní dheachthas <sup>31</sup> 'one did not go'

<b>Imperfect</b>	théinn 'I used to go' théiteá 'you used to go' théadh sí/sibh 'she/you used to go' théimis 'we used to go' théidís 'they used to go' théití 'one used to go'	ní théinn 'I used not go' ní théiteá 'you used not go' ní théadh sí/sibh 'she/you used not go' ní théimis 'we used not go' ní théidís 'they used not go' ní théití 'one used not go'
<b>Conditional</b>	rachainn 'I would go' rachfá 'you would go' rachadh sí/sibh 'she/you would go' rachaimis 'we would go' rachaidís 'they would go' rachfaí 'one would go'	ní rachainn 'I would not go' ní rachfá 'you would not go' ní rachadh sí/sibh 'she/you would not go' ní rachaimis 'we would not go' ní rachaidís 'they would not go' ní rachfaí 'one would not go'
<b>Future</b>	rachaidh tú 'you will go' rachaimid 'we will go' rachfar 'one will go'	ní rachaidh tú 'you will not go' ní rachaimid 'we will not go' ní rachfar 'one will not go'

## Irregular Verbs: Bí

*Bí* has two additional irregularities:

- 1) there are separate forms for the present-habitual tense, which is often translated in Hiberno English with the helping verb 'do' to convey the sense of repetition, e.g. *bíonn sé ag obair go dian* 'he does be working hard' meaning 'he [habitually] works hard';
- 2) the negative preverbal particle *ní* combines with the present-tense dependent form *fuil* to become *níl*, e.g. *níl sé* 'he is not' rather than *ní fhuil sé*.

	Affirmative	Negative
	Independent Forms	Dependent Forms (if any)
<b>Present</b>	táim 'I am' an bhfuilim 'am I?'	nílím 'I am not'
	tá tú 'you are' an bhfuil tú? 'are you?'	níl tú 'you are not'
	táimid 'we are' an bhfuilimid? 'are we?'	nílimid 'we are not'
	táthar 'one is' an bhfuiltear? 'is one?'	níltear 'one is not'
<b>Present Habitual</b>	bím 'I am [habitually]' an mbím? 'am I [habitually]?'  bíonn tú 'you are [habitually]' an mbíonn tú? 'are you [habitually]?'  bíimid 'we are [habitually]' an mbíimid? 'are we [habitually]?'	ní bhím 'I am [habitually] not'  ní bhíonn tú 'you are [habitually] not'  ní bhíimid 'we are [habitually] not'

<b>Present Habitual</b>	bítear ‘one is [habitually]’ an mbítear? ‘is one [habitually]?’	ní bhítear ‘one is [habitually] not’
<b>Past</b>	bhí tú ‘you were’ an raibh tú? ‘were you?’	ní raibh tú ‘you were not’
	bhíomar ‘we were’ an rabhamar ‘were we?’	ní rabhamar ‘we were not’
	bhíothas ‘was’ an rabhthas ‘was?’	ní rabhthas ‘was not’
<b>Imperfect</b>	bhínn ‘I used to be’ an mbínn? ‘used I be?’	ní bhínn ‘I used not be’
	bhíteá ‘you used to be’ an mbíteá? ‘used you be?’	ní bhíteá ‘you used not be’
	bhíodh sí/sibh ‘she/you used to be’ an mbíodh sí/sibh? ‘used she/you be?’	ní bhíodh sí/sibh ‘she/you used not be’
	bhímis ‘we used to be’ an mbímis? ‘used we be?’	ní bhímis ‘we used not be’
	bhídís ‘they used to be’ an mbídís? ‘used they be?’	ní bhídís ‘they used not be’
	bhítí ‘one used to be’ an mbítí? ‘used one be?’	ní bhítí ‘one used not be’
<b>Conditional</b>	bheinn ‘I would be’ an mbeinn? ‘would I be?’	ní bheinn ‘I would not be’
	bheifeá ‘you would be’ an mbeifeá? ‘would you be?’	ní bheifeá ‘you would not be’
	bheadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would be’ an mbeadh sí/sibh? ‘would she/you be?’	ní bheadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would not be’
	bheimis ‘we would be’ an mbeimis? ‘would we be?’	ní bheimis ‘we would not be’
	bheidís ‘they would be’ an mbeidís? ‘would they be?’	ní bheidís ‘they would not be’
	bheifí ‘one would be’ an mbeifí? ‘would one be?’	ní bheifí ‘one would not be’
<b>Future</b>	beidh tú ‘you will be’ an mbeidh tú? ‘will you be?’	ní bheidh tú ‘you will not be’
	beimid ‘we will be’ an mbeimid? ‘will we be?’	ní bheimid ‘we will not be’
	beifear ‘one will be’ an mbeifear? ‘will one be?’	ní bheifear ‘one will not be’

## Irregular Verbs: Beir and Tar

<b>Affirmative</b>	<b>beir</b> ‘bear, take away’ <sup>32</sup>	<b>tar</b> ‘come’
<b>Present</b>	beirim ‘I bear’ beireann tú ‘you bear’ beirimid ‘we bear’ beirtear é ‘it is born/e’	tagaim ‘I come’ tagann tú ‘you come’ tagaimid ‘we come’ tagtar ‘one comes’
<b>Past</b>	rug tú ‘you bore’ rugamar ‘we bore’ rugadh é ‘it was born/e’	tháinig tú ‘you came’ thángamar ‘we came’ thángthas ‘one came’
<b>Imperfect</b>	bheirinn ‘I used to bear’ bheirteá ‘you used to bear’ bheireadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used to bear’ bheirimis ‘we used to bear’ bheiridís ‘they used to bear’ bheirtí é ‘it used to be born/e’	thagainn ‘I used to come’ thagtá ‘you used to come’ thagadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used to come’ thagaimis ‘we used to come’ thagaidís ‘they used to come’ thagtaí ‘one used to come’
<b>Conditional</b>	bhéarfainn ‘I would bear’ bhéarfá ‘you would bear’ bhéarfadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would bear’ bhéarfaimis ‘we would bear’ bhéarfaidís ‘they would bear’ bhéarfaí é ‘it would be born/e’	thiocfainn ‘I would come’ thiocfá ‘you would come’ thiocfadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would come’ thiocfaimis ‘we would come’ thiocfaidís ‘they would come’ thiocfaí ‘one would come’
<b>Future</b>	béarfaidh tú ‘you will bear’ béarfaimid ‘we will bear’ béarfar é ‘it will be born/e’	tiocfaidh tú ‘you will come’ tiocfaimid ‘we will come’ tiocfar ‘one will come’
<b>Negative</b>	<b>beir</b> ‘bear’	<b>tar</b> ‘come’
<b>Present</b>	ní bheirim ‘I do not bear’ ní bheireann tú ‘you do not bear’ ní bheirimid ‘we do not bear’ ní bheirtear é ‘it is not born/e’	ní thagaim ‘I do not come’ ní thagann tú ‘you do not come’ ní thagaimid ‘we do not come’ ní thagtar ‘one does not come’
<b>Past</b>	níor rug tú ‘you did not bear’ níor rugamar ‘we did not bear’ níor rugadh é ‘it was not born/e’	níor tháinig tú ‘you did not come’ níor thángamar ‘we did not come’ níor thángthas ‘one did not come’
<b>Imperfect</b>	ní bheirinn ‘I used not bear’ ní bheirteá ‘you used not bear’ ní bheireadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used not bear’ ní bheirimis ‘we used not bear’ ní bheiridís ‘they used not bear’ ní bheirtí é ‘it used not be born/e’	ní thagainn ‘I used not come’ ní thagtá ‘you used not come’ ní thagadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used not come’ ní thagaimis ‘we used not come’ ní thagaidís ‘they used not come’ ní thagtaí ‘one used not come’
<b>Conditional</b>	ní bhéarfainn ‘I would not bear’ ní bhéarfá ‘you would not bear’ ní bhéarfadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would not bear’	ní thiocfainn ‘I would not come’ ní thiocfá ‘you would not come’ ní thiocfadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would not come’

<b>Conditional</b>	ní bhéarfaimis ‘we would not bear’ ní bhéarfaidís ‘they would not bear’ ní bhéarfaí é ‘it would not be born/e’	ní thiocfaimis ‘we would not come’ ní thiochfaidís ‘they would not come’ ní thiochfaí ‘one would not come’
<b>Future</b>	ní bhéarfaidh tú ‘you will not bear’ ní bhéarfaimid ‘we will not bear’ ní bhéarfar é ‘it will not be born/e’	ní thiochfaidh tú ‘you will not come’ ní thiochfaimid ‘we will not come’ ní thiochfar ‘one will not come’

## Irregular Verbs: Déan and Feic

*Déan* and *feic* share one additional, unthinkable irregularity: the dependent form of the past autonomous is lenited after *ní*.

	<b>Affirmative</b>	<b>Negative</b>
	<b>déan</b> ‘do, make’	
	Independent Forms	Dependent Forms (if any)
<b>Present</b>	déanaim ‘I do’ déanann tú ‘you do’ déanaimid ‘we do’ déantar é ‘it is done’	ní dhéanaim ‘I do not’ ní dhéanann tú ‘you do not’ ní dhéanaimid ‘we do not’ ní dhéantar é ‘it is not done’
<b>Past</b>	rinne tú ‘you did’ rinneamar ‘we did’ rinneadh é ‘it was done’	ní dhearna tú ‘you did not do’ ní dhearnamar ‘we did not do’ ní dhearnadh é ‘it was not done’
<b>Imperfect</b>	dhéanainn ‘I used to do’ dhéantá ‘you used to do’ dhéanadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used to do’ dhéanaimis ‘we used to do’ dhéanaidís ‘they used to do’ dhéantaí é ‘it used to be done’	ní dhéanainn ‘I used not do’ ní dhéantá ‘you used not do’ ní dhéanadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used not do’ ní dhéanaimis ‘we used not do’ ní dhéanaidís ‘they used not do’ ní dhéantaí é ‘it used not be done’
<b>Conditional</b>	dhéanfainn ‘I would do’ dhéanfá ‘you would do’ dhéanfadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would do’ dhéanfaimis ‘we would do’ dhéanfaidís ‘they would do’ dhéanfaí é ‘it would be done’	ní dhéanfainn ‘I would not do’ ní dhéanfá ‘you would not do’ ní dhéanfadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would not do’ ní dhéanfaimis ‘we would not do’ ní dhéanfaidís ‘they would not do’ ní dhéanfaí é ‘it would not be done’
<b>Future</b>	déanfaidh tú ‘you will do’ déanfaimid ‘we will do’ déanfar é ‘it will be done’	ní dhéanfaidh tú ‘you will not do’ ní dhéanfaimid ‘we will not do’ ní dhéanfar é ‘it will not be done’
	<b>feic</b> ‘see’	
	Independent Forms	Dependent Forms (if any)
<b>Present</b>	feicim ‘I see’ feiceann tú ‘you see’ feicimid ‘we see’ feictear é ‘it is seen’	ní fheicim ‘I do not see’ ní fheiceann tú ‘you do not see’ ní fheicimid ‘we do not see’ ní fheictear é ‘it is not seen’

<b>Past</b>	chonaic tú ‘you saw’ chonaiceamar ‘we saw’ chonacthas é ‘it was seen’	ní fhaca tú ‘you did not see’ ní fhacamar ‘we did not see’ ní fhacthas é ‘it was not seen’
<b>Imperfect</b>	d’fheicinn ‘I used to see’ d’fheicteá ‘you used to see’ d’fheiceadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used to see’ d’fheicimis ‘we used to see’ d’fheicidís ‘they used to see’ d’fheictí é ‘it used to be seen’	ní fheicinn ‘I used not see’ ní fheicteá ‘you used not see’ ní fheiceadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used not see’ ní fheicimis ‘we used not see’ ní fheicidís ‘they used not see’ ní fheictí é ‘it used not be seen’
<b>Conditional</b>	d’fheicfinn ‘I would see’ d’fheicfeá ‘you would see’ d’fheicfeadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would see’ d’fheicfimis ‘we would see’ d’fheicfidís ‘they would see’ d’fheicfí é ‘it would be seen’	ní fheicfinn ‘I would not see’ ní fheicfeá ‘you would not see’ ní fheicfeadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would not see’ ní fheicfimis ‘we would not see’ ní fheicfidís ‘they would not see’ ní fheicfí é ‘it would not be seen’
<b>Future</b>	feicfidh tú ‘you will see’ feicfimid ‘we will see’ feicfear é ‘it will be seen’	ní fheicfidh tú ‘you will not see’ ní fheicfimid ‘we will not see’ ní fheicfear é ‘it will not be seen’

## Irregular Verbs: Clois and Ith

*Clois* has a twin, *cluinn*, which shares its irregular past-tense forms and conjugates regularly in all other tenses, e.g. *cluineann tú* ‘you hear’, *chuala tú* ‘you heard’, *chluinteá* ‘you used to hear’, *chluinfeá* ‘you would hear’, *chluinfidh tú* ‘you will hear’, etc.

	<b>Affirmative clois</b> ‘hear’	<b>ith</b> ‘eat’
<b>Present</b>	cloisim ‘I hear’ cloiseann tú ‘you hear’ cloisimid ‘we hear’ cloistear é ‘it is heard’	ithim ‘I eat’ itheann tú ‘you eat’ ithimid ‘we eat’ itear <sup>33</sup> é ‘it is eaten’
<b>Past</b>	chuala tú ‘you heard’ chualamar ‘we heard’ chualathas é ‘it was heard’	d’ith tú ‘you ate’ d’itheamar ‘we ate’ itheadh é ‘it was eaten’
<b>Imperfect</b>	chloisinn ‘I used to hear’ chloisteá ‘you used to hear’ chloiseadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used to hear’ chloisimis ‘we used to hear’ chloisidís ‘they used to hear’ chloistí é ‘it used to be heard’	d’ithinn ‘I used to eat’ d’iteá ‘you used to eat’ d’itheadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used to eat’ d’ithimis ‘we used to eat’ d’ithidís ‘they used to eat’ d’ití é ‘it used to be eaten’
<b>Conditional</b>	chloisfinn ‘I would hear’ chloisfeá ‘you would hear’ chloisfeadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would hear’ chloisfimis ‘we would hear’	d’íosfainn ‘I would eat’ d’íosfá ‘you would eat’ d’íosfadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would eat’ d’íosfaimis ‘we would eat’

<b>Conditional</b>	chloisfidís ‘they would hear’ chloisfí é ‘it would be heard’	d’íosfaidís ‘they would eat’ d’íosfaí é ‘it would be eaten’
<b>Future</b>	cloisfidh tú ‘you will hear’ cloisfimid ‘we will hear’ cloisfear é ‘it will be heard’	íosfaidh tú ‘you will eat’ íosfaimid ‘we will eat’ íosfar é ‘it will be eaten’
<b>Negative</b>	<b>clois</b> ‘hear’	<b>ith</b> ‘eat’
<b>Present</b>	ní chloisim ‘I do not hear’ ní chloiseann tú ‘you do not hear’ ní chloisimid ‘we do not hear’ ní chloistear é ‘it is not heard’	ní ithim ‘I do not eat’ ní itheann tú ‘you do not eat’ ní ithimid ‘we do not eat’ ní itear é ‘it is not eaten’
<b>Past</b>	níor chuala tú ‘you did not hear’ níor chualamar ‘we did not hear’ níor chualathas é ‘it was not heard’	níor ith tú ‘you did not eat’ níor itheamar ‘we did not eat’ níor itheadh é ‘it was not eaten’
<b>Imperfect</b>	ní chloisinn ‘I used not hear’ ní chloisteá ‘you used not hear’ ní chloiseadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used not hear’ ní chloisimis ‘we used not hear’ ní chloisidís ‘they used not hear’ ní chloistí é ‘it used not be heard’	ní ithinn ‘I used not eat’ ní iteá ‘you used not eat’ ní itheadh sí/sibh ‘she/you used not eat’ ní ithimis ‘we used not eat’ ní ithidís ‘they used not eat’ ní ití é ‘it used not be eaten’
<b>Conditional</b>	ní chloisfinn ‘I would not hear’ ní chloisfeá ‘you would not hear’ ní chloisfeadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would not hear’ ní chloisfimis ‘we would not hear’ ní chloisfidís ‘they would not hear’ ní chloisfí é ‘it would not be heard’	ní íosfainn ‘I would not eat’ ní íosfá ‘you would not eat’ ní íosfadh sí/sibh ‘she/you would not eat’ ní íosfaimis ‘we would not eat’ ní íosfaidís ‘they would not eat’ ní íosfaí é ‘it would not be eaten’
<b>Future</b>	ní chloisfidh tú ‘you will not hear’ ní chloisfimid ‘we will not hear’ ní chloisfear é ‘it will not be heard’	ní íosfaidh tú ‘you will not eat’ ní íosfaimid ‘we will not eat’ ní íosfar é ‘it will not be eaten’

## Irregular Verbs: the Substantive vs. the Copula

Irish has two verbs that mean ‘be’:

- 1) the irregular substantive verb *bí*;
- 2) the irregular, defective Copula *is* (see also *Irregular Verbs: Bí* and *The Copula*).

Those who are familiar with the Spanish verbs *ser* and *estar* will experience *déjà vu* and anticipate the main differences:

	<b>bí</b>	<b>is</b>
<b>Duration of Being</b>	<i>usually temporary</i>	<i>usually permanent</i>
	tá sí anseo ‘she is here’ for now, but she may not have been here before, and she will	is bean í ‘she is a woman’ forever, since this is what she is, and barring major surgery this is

	<b>bí</b>	<b>is</b>
<b>Duration of Being</b>	eventually leave	what she will always be
<b>Tenses and Moods</b>	present, present habitual, past, imperfect, conditional, imperative, subjunctive	present and past/conditional <sup>34</sup>
<b>Person and Number</b>	in addition to analytic forms, has synthetic forms that specify person and number, and has autonomous forms	has only analytic forms that do not specify person or number, and has no autonomous forms
	<i>Example, the Conditional Mood:</i>	
	<b>bí</b>	<b>is</b>
	bheinn ‘I would be’ bheifeá ‘you would be’ bheadh sí ‘she would be’ bheimis ‘we would be’ bheadh sibh ‘you would be’ bheidís ‘they would be’ bheifí ‘one would be’	ba ‘was/would be’
	<b>bí</b>	<b>is</b>
<b>Verbal Noun</b>	has one, bheith ‘being’	has none
<b>Subject Pronoun</b>	in the nominative case tá sí ina banaltra ‘she is a nurse’	in the accusative case is banaltra í ‘she is a nurse’
<b>May Be Immediately Followed by</b>	pronoun in the nominative case, proper noun, definite article, indefinite noun	pronoun in the accusative case, indefinite noun, verbal noun, adverb, adjective, conjunction, preposition or prepositional pronoun
<b>May never Be Immediately Followed by</b>	adjective, adverb, conjunction, preposition or prepositional pronoun	definite article, proper noun, conjugated verb

It is possible to express many of the same ideas using either a form of *bí* or a form of *is*, but the syntax will be very different:

tá sí ina banaltra ‘she is a nurse’ idiom of <i>tá + i + a</i> links the subject <i>sí</i> ‘she’ and the predicate banaltra ‘nurse’ <sup>35</sup>	is banaltra í ‘she is a nurse’ copula equates the subject <i>í</i> ‘her’ with the predicate <i>banaltra</i> ‘nurse’
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Sometimes, however, a particular idea can be expressed only with *bí* or only with *is*:

	<b>bí</b>	<b>is</b>
	tá an leabhar agam ‘I have the book’ idiom of <i>bí + ag</i> conveys	is liomsa an leabhar ‘the book is mine’ idiom of <i>is + le</i> conveys

Usage

<b>bí</b>	<b>is</b>
custody: I have the book now, but I do not claim to own it	ownership: whether or not I have the book right now, I own it
<i>helping verb, especially with a verbal noun or a past participle</i>	—
tá sí ag obair ‘she is working’	
tá an obair déanta aici ‘she has done the work’	
<i>existence</i>	—
bhí seanbhean ann ‘there was an old woman’	
<i>status at some point in time</i>	—
bhí sí ina codladh ‘she was sleeping’	
<i>location at some point in time</i>	—
bhí sí sa bhaile ‘she was at home’	
<i>anything else requiring the verb ‘to be’, except to specify what or which one. For these tasks, you must use the Copula.</i>	—
—	<i>emphasis, on the word or phrase that immediately follows</i>
	is ait an duine é ‘he is a strange person’
—	<i>to state what something is,</i>
	is cat é OR cat is ea é ‘it is a cat’
—	<i>to state which one something is,</i>
	is é mo chat é ‘he’s my cat’

## Part 2

# The Copula: Forms

The Copula is irregular and defective, i.e. **it cannot be conjugated to specify number or person, and its tenses and moods are limited to the present, past, and conditional.** The past and conditional forms look exactly the same and must be distinguished by context. For example, the conditional mood is most likely in ba *mhaith liom deoch* ‘*I would like a drink*’. But the past tense is most likely in nuair a bhí mé i mo stócach, ba mhór agam tacaíocht mo mhuintire ‘*when I was a young man, I appreciated the support of my people*’.

	Present Tense	Present Tense before Vowel	Past or Conditional	P/C before Vowel or ‘fh + Vowel’
<b>Affirmative</b>	is	is	ba <sup>L1</sup>	b <sup>L2</sup>
<b>Negative</b>	ní	ní <sup>3</sup>	níor <sup>L</sup>	níorbh <sup>L</sup>
<b>Interrogative</b>	an	an	ar <sup>L</sup>	arbh <sup>L</sup>
<b>Neg. Interrogative</b>	nach	nach	nár <sup>L</sup>	nárbh <sup>L</sup>
<b>Direct Relative</b>	is	is	ba <sup>L</sup>	ab <sup>L</sup>
<b>Neg. Dir. Relative</b>	nach	nach	nár <sup>L</sup>	nárbh <sup>L</sup>
<b>Indirect Relative</b>	ar	arb <sup>4</sup>	ar <sup>L</sup>	arbh <sup>L</sup>
<b>Neg. Ind. Relative</b>	nach	nach	nár <sup>L</sup>	nárbh <sup>L</sup>
<b>Dependent Affirm.</b>	gur	gurb	gur <sup>L</sup>	gurbh <sup>L</sup>
<b>Dependent Neg.</b>	nach	nach	nár <sup>L</sup>	nárbh <sup>L</sup>

## The Copula: A Case Study

Céard a dhéanfadh mac an chait ach luch a mharú?

‘What would the cat’s son do but kill a mouse?’

♥ ‘Céard a dhéanfadh mac an chait ach luch a mharú?’ is a proverb comparable to ‘like father, like son’ and ‘the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree’.

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Affirmative</b> <u>Is</u> dual do mhac an chait luch a mharú. ‘It’s natural for the cat’s son to kill a mouse.’
<b>Past/Cond.:</b>	<b>Affirmative</b> <u>Ba</u> dhual do mhac an chait luch a mharú. ‘It was/would be natural for the cat’s son to kill a mouse.’
<b>Present:</b>	<b>Negative</b> <u>Ní</u> dual do mhac an chait luch a mharú. ‘It isn’t natural for the cat’s son to kill a mouse.’
<b>Past/Cond.:</b>	<b>Negative</b> <u>Níor</u> dhual do mhac an chait luch a mharú. ‘It wasn’t/wouldn’t be natural for the cat’s son to kill a mouse.’
	<b>Interrogative</b>



**Present:** An dual do mhac an chait luch a mharú?  
'Is it natural for the cat's son to kill a mouse?'

**Past/Cond.:** Ar dhual do mhac an chait luch a mharú?  
'Was/Would it be natural for the cat's son to kill a mouse?'

#### Negative Interrogative

**Present:** Nach dual do mhac an chait luch a mharú?  
'Isn't it natural for the cat's son to kill a mouse?'

**Past/Cond.:** Nár dhual do mhac an chait luch a mharú?  
'Wasn't/Wouldn't it be natural for the cat's son to kill a mouse?'

#### Direct Relative

**Present:** Seo an cat is fearr liom.  
[this is the cat that is best by me]  
'This is the cat that I like best.'

**Past/Cond.:** Seo an cat ab fhearr liom.  
[this is the cat that was/would be best by me]  
'This is the cat that I liked/would like best.'

#### Negative Direct Relative

**Present:** Sin luch nach maith liom.  
[that is a mouse that is not good by me]  
'That's a mouse that I don't like.'

**Past/Cond.:** Sin luch nár mhaith liom.  
[that is a mouse that was not/would not be good by me]  
'That is a mouse that I didn't/wouldn't like.'

#### Indirect Relative

**Present:** Rachaidh mé sa tóir ar mhac an chait ar dual dó luch a mharú.  
[I will go in the pursuit on the cat's son whom is natural for him a mouse to kill]  
or  
Rachaidh mé sa tóir ar mhac an chait dar dual luch a mharú.  
[I will go in the pursuit on the cat's son for whom is natural a mouse to kill]  
'I will pursue the cat's son for whom it is natural to kill a mouse.'

**Past/Cond.:** Chonaic mé mac an chait ar dhual dó luch a mharú.  
[I saw the cat's son whom was/would be natural for him a mouse to kill]  
or  
Chonaic mé mac an chait dar dhual luch a mharú.  
[I saw the cat's son for whom was/would be natural a mouse to kill]  
'I saw the cat's son for whom it was/would be natural to kill a mouse.'

#### Negative Indirect Relative

**Present:** Scaoilfidh mé saor an cat nach dual dó luch a mharú.  
[I will release the cat that is not natural for him a mouse to kill]  
'I will release the cat for whom it isn't natural to kill a mouse.'

**Past/Cond.:** Scaoil mé saor an cat nár dhual dó luch a mharú.  
[I released the cat that wasn't/wouldn't be natural for him a mouse to kill]

'I released the cat for whom it wasn't/wouldn't be natural to kill a mouse.'

#### Dependent Affirmative

**Present:** Deir sí gur dual do mhac an chait luch a mharú.  
'She says that it's natural for the cat's son to kill a mouse.'

**Past/Cond.:** Dúirt sí gur dhual do mhac an chait luch a mharú.  
'She said that it was/would be natural for the cat's son to kill a mouse.'

#### Dependent Negative

**Present:** Deir seisean, áfach, nach dual do mhac an chait luch a mharú.  
'He says, however, that it isn't natural for the cat's son to kill a mouse.'

**Past/Cond.:** Dúirt seisean, áfach, nár dhual do mhac an chait luch a mharú.  
'He said, however, that it wasn't/would be natural for the cat's son to kill a mouse.'

## The Copula: Combined Forms

The Copula combines with some conjunctions, interrogatives, and simple prepositions. Here are the commonest:

	Present	Present before Vowels and 'fh'	Past or Conditional	P/C before Vowel or 'fh+Vowel'
<b>cé?</b> 'who?'	cé <sup>5</sup>	cérb + í, é, iad	cér <sup>L</sup>	cérbh <sup>L</sup> + í, é, iad
<b>cá?</b> 'what?/where?'	cá	cárb	cár <sup>L</sup>	cárbh <sup>L</sup>
<b>do</b> 'for'	dar	darb	dar <sup>L</sup>	darbh <sup>L</sup>
<b>sula</b> 'prior to, before'	sular	sularb	sular <sup>L</sup>	sularbh <sup>L</sup>
<b>mura</b> 'if not'	mura	murab	murar <sup>L</sup>	murarbh <sup>L</sup>
<b>má</b> 'if' <sup>6</sup>	más	más	má ba <sup>L</sup>	má b <sup>L</sup>
<b>dá</b> 'if'	—	—	dá mba <sup>L</sup>	dá mb <sup>L</sup>
<b>ó</b> 'since'	ós	ós	—	—

## The Copula: 'What is it?'

As its name implies – 'copula' is Latin for 'a link' – the **Copula** is a verb that links elements in a sentence. It is best known as a means of linking and essentially equating nouns with other nouns or with adjectives (see also *The Copula: 'Which is it?'* ~ *Emphasis*). **You must use the Copula to ask, answer, or state what something is** because any form of the question 'what is it?' or of the answer/statement 'it is what' equates two nouns:

- 1) the **Subject**, the 'it' that is being identified, and
- 2) the **Predicate Noun**, the 'what' that is the identity.

The syntax for a question, answer, or statement of this kind is ‘**Copula + Predicate Noun + Subject**’.

The **Subject** can be:

- 1) a personal pronoun,
- 2) a demonstrative pronoun, or
- 3) an indefinite, definite, or proper noun (see *Pronouns: Types and Nouns: Types*).

The **Predicate Noun**<sup>8</sup> can *only* be an indefinite noun. Remember that in Irish, the **Predicate Noun precedes the Subject**, whereas in English, the **Subject precedes the Predicate Noun**.

How you ask ‘what is it?’ depends on your preconceptions.

### I. TO ASK WHAT ‘IT’ IS:

Céard é?  
‘What is it?’

Céard iad sin?  
‘What are those?’

Céard iad plátaí?  
‘What are plates?’

‘(Copula + Predicate Noun) + Subject’ = ‘(céard<sup>9</sup>) + é, iad sin, iad plátaí’

Because you do not know the Subject’s identity, you cannot know whether it is masculine or feminine, but it is customary to **use é for a singular unknown Subject and iad for a plural unknown Subject**.<sup>10</sup> Note that although they are grammatically possible, *céard muid?* ‘what are we?’ and *céard sibh?* ‘what are you?’ do not normally occur in either spoken or written Irish.

Céard é an rud sin thall?  
‘What is that thing over there?’

Céard í an uirlis seo?  
‘What is this tool?’

‘(Copula + Predicate Noun) + Proleptic Pronoun + Subject’ = ‘(céard) + é, í + an rud sin thall, an uirlis seo’

When the Subject of this question is a definite or a proper noun, a Proleptic Pronoun must separate *céard* from the Subject. This is because the Copula can *never* be immediately followed by a definite or a proper noun.<sup>11</sup> **Proleptic Pronouns** exist only in the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. *é/í* and 3<sup>rd</sup> p. pl. *iad*. **The gender and number of the Predicate Noun dictate the gender and number of the Proleptic Pronoun, which is a purely grammatical ‘buffer’ and does not appear in translation.**

### IA: TO ANSWER/STATE WHAT ‘IT’ IS:

Céard é? Is cistin í.  
‘What is it?’ ‘It’s a kitchen.’

Céard iad sin? Is plátaí iad sin. or Sin plátaí.<sup>12</sup>  
‘What are those?’ ‘Those are plates.’

Céard iad plátaí? Is miasa plátaí.  
‘What are plates?’ ‘Plates are dishes.’

Is miasa iad.  
‘They are dishes.’

Céard é an rud sin thall? Is oigheann an rud sin thall.  
‘What is that thing over there?’ ‘That thing over there is an oven.’

Is oigheann é.  
‘It is an oven.’

Céard í an uirlis seo? Is scríobán an uirlis seo.  
‘What is this tool?’ ‘This tool is a grater.’

Is scríobán é.  
‘It is a grater.’

‘Copula + Predicate Noun + Subject’ = ‘is + cistin, plátaí, miasa, oigheann, scríobán + í, iad sin, plátaí, iad, an rud sin thall, é, an uirlis seo’

When answering the question, it is equally correct to repeat the Subject Noun or to replace it with the appropriate Subject Pronoun. Guessing, answering, or stating what ‘it’ is assigns ‘it’ a gender, so **the gender of the Predicate Noun determines the gender of the Subject Pronoun.**

### II. TO GUESS WHAT ‘IT’ IS:

An cistin í?  
‘Is it a kitchen?’

Nach cócairí sibh?  
‘Aren’t you cooks?’

Nach plátaí iad sin?  
‘Aren’t those plates?’

An miasa plátaí?  
‘Are plates dishes?’

Nach oigheann an rud sin thall?  
‘Isn’t that thing over there an oven?’

An scríobán an uirlis seo?  
‘Is this tool a grater?’

‘Copula + Predicate Noun + Subject’ = ‘an, nach + cistin, cócairí, plátaí, miasa, oigheann, scríobán + í, sibh, iad sin, plátaí, an rud sin thall, an uirlis seo’

When answering the question, it is equally correct to repeat the Subject Noun or to replace it with the appropriate Subject Pronoun. Guessing, answering, or stating what ‘it’ is assigns ‘it’ a gender, so **the gender of the Predicate Noun determines the gender of the Subject Pronoun.**

## IIA. TO ANSWER A GUESS OF WHAT 'IT' IS:

Is ea.  
'It is.'

Ní hea.  
'It isn't.'

Is iad.  
'They are.'

Ní hiad.  
'They aren't.'

'Copula + Predicate Pronoun' = 'is, ní + ea, iad'

In Modern Irish the neuter pronoun *ea* 'it' is used *only* with the Copula and *only* in certain set phrases. Like the American English 'yeah' and 'nah' – slang words that are substandard in formal writing but extremely common in speech – *is ea* and *ní hea* convey a minimal affirmative or negative and are often followed by a more detailed answer (see III below). But they do not mean 'yes' or 'no', and *is ea* and *ní hea* should not be used to answer questions that begin with a verb other than the Copula!

## III. TO GUESS THAT A PARTICULAR ITEM BELONGS IN A PARTICULAR CATEGORY:

An cnónna 'macadamias'?  
'Are 'macadamias' nuts?'

Nach glasra beacán?  
'Isn't a mushroom a vegetable?'

'Copula + Predicate Noun + Subject' = 'an, nach + cnónna, glasra + macadamias, beacán'

The gender of the Subject Noun may be different from the gender of the Predicate Noun.

## IIIA. TO ANSWER/STATE THAT A PARTICULAR ITEM BELONGS IN A PARTICULAR CATEGORY:

An cnónna 'macadamias'?  
'Are 'macadamias' nuts?'  
Is ea, is cnónna 'macadamias'.  
'Yeah, 'macadamias' are nuts.'

Is ea, is cnónna iad.  
'Yeah, they're nuts.'

Nach glasra beacán?  
'Isn't a mushroom a vegetable?'  
Ní hea, is fungas beacán.  
'Nah, a mushroom is a fungus.'

Ní hea, ní glasra é.  
'Nah, it's not a vegetable.'

'Copula + Subject' = 'is, ní + ea' (neither of these responses attempts to identify 'it,' so there is no Predicate Noun) followed by 'Copula +

Predicate Noun + Subject' = 'is, ní + cnónna, fungus, glasra + macadamias, iad, beacán, é'

When answering the question, it is equally correct to repeat the Subject Noun or to replace it with the appropriate Subject Pronoun. Guessing, answering, or stating what 'it' is assigns 'it' a gender, so the gender of the Predicate Noun determines the gender of the Subject Pronoun.

## EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND STATEMENTS:

Céard é?  
'What is he?'

Is Gaeilgeoir é.  
'He's a Gaeligore.'<sup>13</sup>

Céard é sin?  
'What's that?'

Is Gaeilgeoir eile é sin. *or* Sin Gaeilgeoir eile.  
'That's another Gaeligore.'

An píleair Gaeilgeoir?  
'Is a Gaeligore a policeman?'

Ní hea, is díograiseoir Gaeilgeoir.  
'Nah, a Gaeligore is an enthusiast.'

An rómánsaithe díograiseoirí?  
'Are enthusiasts romanticists?'

Is ea, is rómánsaithe iad.  
'Yeah, they're romanticists.'

Céard é seo?  
'What's this?'

Is maide rámha é seo. *or* Seo maide rámha.  
'This is an oar.'

Nach comhtholgtha iad seo?  
'Aren't these concussions?'

Ní hea, ní comhtholgtha iad seo.  
'Nah, these aren't concussions.'

Céard iad?  
'What are they?'

Is cloigne scoilte iad.  
'They're split skulls.'

Nach leanáí sibh?  
'Aren't you children?'

Ní hea, is bainbh i mbrístí sinn.  
'Nah, we're piglets in trousers.'

An cleas tairbheach bainbh i mbrístí?  
'Are piglets in trousers a profitable ruse?'

Is ea, is cleas tairbheach bainbh i mbrístí.  
'Yeah, piglets in trousers are a profitable ruse.'

An cigire somheallta cigire gearr-  
radharcach?

Is ea, is cigire somheallta cigire gearr-  
radharcach!

'Is a nearsighted inspector an  
easily-deceived inspector?'

'Yeah, a nearsighted inspector is an easily-  
deceived inspector!'

♥ These examples refer to events in Myles na gCopaleen's *An Béal Bocht* 'The Poor Mouth' (Cork: Mercier Press, 1941), a 21-pun salute to Tomás Ó Criomhthain's *An tOileánach* ['The Islandman'] 1929. New edition, ed. Seán Ó Coileáin (Baile Átha Cliath: Cló Talbóid, 2002).

## The Copula: 'Which is it?'<sup>14</sup>

As its name implies – 'copula' is Latin for 'a link' – the Copula is a verb that links elements in a sentence. It is best known as a means of linking, and essentially equating nouns with other nouns or with adjectives (see also *The Copula: 'What is it?' ~ Emphasis*). You **must** use the Copula to ask, answer, or state **which 'it' is** because any form of the question 'which is it?' or of the answer/statement 'it is which' links two nouns: 1) the Subject,



the 'it' that is to be distinguished from others of its kind, and 2) the **Predicate**, the 'which' that encapsulates that distinction.

**When the Predicate is a noun**, the syntax for a question, answer, or statement is **'Copula + Proleptic Pronoun + Predicate Noun + Subject'**.

**When the Predicate is a pronoun**, the syntax for a question, answer, or statement is **'Copula + Predicate Pronoun + Subject'**.

The **Predicate Noun** can be a definite noun or a proper noun (see *Nouns: Types*). The **Predicate Pronoun** can be a pronoun, a pronoun with an emphatic suffix, or a demonstrative pronoun (see *Pronouns: Types*). The **Subject** can be a definite noun, a proper noun, or a pronoun. **Because the goal is to positively identify which 'it' is, at least one of the two nouns being equated must be definite or proper.** The Subject, the Predicate, or the Subject *and* the Predicate can be definite or proper nouns. **In contrast, only the Subject or the Predicate can be a pronoun.**

The Copula can *never* be immediately followed by a definite or a proper noun, so a **Proleptic Pronoun must separate the Copula from the Predicate Noun.**<sup>15</sup> **Proleptic Pronouns** exist only in the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. *é/í* and 3<sup>rd</sup> p. pl. *iad*. **The gender and number of the Predicate Noun dictate the gender and number of the Proleptic Pronoun, which is a purely grammatical 'buffer' and does not appear in translation.** A question or answer/statement that contains both a Proleptic Pronoun and a Subject Pronoun contains the same pronoun twice. In *is iad na buaiteoirí iad* 'they are the winners', the first *iad* is a Proleptic Pronoun and is *not* translated, whereas the second *iad* is the Subject and is translated 'they'.

**A Predicate Pronoun can immediately follow the Copula.** *Is muid na buaiteoirí* 'we are the winners' contains no Proleptic Pronoun, and in its place is the Predicate Pronoun *muid* 'we'.

Note: The lack of correspondence between the syntax of the Irish examples and the syntax of the translations is explained in the Warning after IIIa below.

How you ask 'which is it?' depends on whether the Subject, the Predicate, or both are definite or proper nouns.

### I. TO ASK ABOUT A SUBJECT THAT IS A DEFINITE OR A PROPER NOUN:

- Cé hé an rí?  
'Who is the king?'
- Cé hí an bhanríon seo?  
'Who is this queen?'
- Cé hiad bhur ministéirí?  
'Who are your ministers?'
- Cé hiad Aaron agus Meg?  
'Who are Aaron and Meg?'

**'Copula + Proleptic Pronoun + Subject'** = 'cé + hé, hí, hiad + an rí, an bhanríon seo, bhur ministéirí, Aaron agus Meg'

Remember that

- a) the interrogative *cé* contains the Copula,
- b) the Copula cannot be immediately followed by a definite or a proper noun, and therefore
- c) *cé* cannot be immediately followed by a definite or a proper noun. **Because the Subject is a definite or a proper noun, a Proleptic Pronoun of the same gender and number as the Subject must immediately follow the Copula.**

### IA. IF THE ANSWER/STATEMENT CONTAINS A PREDICATE NOUN:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Cé hé an rí?<br>'Who is the king?'                    | Is é <u>Aaron</u> an rí.<br>'The king is <u>Aaron</u> .'                                     |
| Cé hí an bhanríon seo?<br>'Who is this queen?'        | Is í <u>Meg</u> an bhanríon seo.<br>'This queen is <u>Meg</u> .'                             |
| Cé hiad bhur ministéirí?<br>'Who are your ministers?' | Is iad <u>a gcairde</u> ár ministéirí.<br>'Our ministers are <u>their friends</u> .'         |
| Cé hiad Aaron agus Meg?<br>'Who are Aaron and Meg?'   | Is iad <u>an bheirt sin</u> Aaron agus Meg.<br>'Aaron and Meg are <u>those two people</u> .' |

**'Copula + Proleptic Pronoun + Predicate Noun + Subject'** = 'is + é, í, iad + Aaron, Meg, a gcairde, an bheirt sin + an rí, an bhanríon seo, ár ministéirí, Aaron agus Meg'

**Because the Predicate Noun is definite or proper, a Proleptic Pronoun of the same gender and number as the Predicate Noun must immediately follow the Copula.**

### IB. IF THE ANSWER/STATEMENT CONTAINS A PREDICATE PRONOUN:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Cé hé an rí?<br>'Who is the king?'                    | Is <u>eisean</u> an rí.<br>' <u>He</u> is the king.'  |
| Cé hí an bhanríon seo?<br>'Who is this queen?'        | Is <u>í seo</u> an bhanríon. <i>or</i><br><u>Seo í</u> an bhanríon. <sup>16</sup><br>' <u>This</u> is the queen.' |
| Cé hiad bhur ministéirí?<br>'Who are your ministers?' | Is <u>iadsan</u> bhur ministéirí.<br>' <u>They</u> are your ministers.'   |
| Cé hiad na ridirí?<br>'Who are the knights?'          | Is <u>sinne</u> na ridirí.<br>' <u>We</u> are the knights.'   |
| Cé hé a mbreitheamh?<br>'Who is their judge?'         | Is <u>tusa</u> a mbreitheamh.<br>' <u>You</u> are their judge.'   |

Cé hiad Aaron agus Meg?  
'Who are Aaron and Meg?'

Is iad sin Aaron agus Meg. *or*  
Sin iad Aaron agus Meg.  
'Those are Aaron and Meg.'

'Copula + Predicate Pronoun + Subject' = 'is + eisean, í seo, iad, sinne, tú, iad sin + an rí, an bhanríon, bhur ministéirí, na ridirí, a mbreitheamh, Aaron agus Meg'

The number and gender of the Subject determine the number and gender of the Predicate Pronoun that immediately follows the Copula.

## II. TO ASK ABOUT A PARTICULAR CANDIDATE DENOTED BY A PREDICATE NOUN:

An é an fear seo an rí?  
'Is this man the king?'

Nach í a bhean chéile an bhanríon sin?  
'Isn't that queen his wife?'

'Copula + Proleptic Pronoun + Predicate Noun + Subject' = 'an, nach + é, í + an fear seo, a bhean chéile + an rí, an bhanríon sin'

Because the Predicate Noun is definite or proper, a Proleptic Pronoun of the same gender and number as the Predicate Noun must immediately follow the Copula.

## IIA. IF THE ANSWER/STATEMENT CONTAINS A PREDICATE PRONOUN:

An é an fear seo an rí?                      Ní hé.  
'Is the king this man?'                      'He is not.'

Nach í a bhean chéile an bhanríon sin?      Is í.  
'Isn't that queen his wife?'                      'She is.'

'Copula + Predicate Pronoun' = 'ní, is + é, í'

The *seo* or *sin* in the question need not be repeated in the answer. The demonstrative appears in the question because the person being asked cannot be expected to know which candidate is under consideration. The demonstrative does not appear in the answer because the person who has asked knows exactly which candidate s/he is considering and needs only to have the guess confirmed or corrected.

## III. TO ASK ABOUT A PARTICULAR CANDIDATE DENOTED BY A PREDICATE PRONOUN:

An é seo an rí?  
'Is this the king?'

Nach í sin an bhanríon?  
'Isn't that the queen?'

An iad seo an rí agus an bhanríon?  
'Are these the king and the queen?'

Nach muidne na ridirí?  
'Aren't we the knights?'

An tusa ár mbreitheamh?  
'Are you our judge?'

'Copula + Predicate Pronoun + Subject' = 'an, nach + é seo, í sin, iad seo, muidne, tusa + an rí, an bhanríon, an rí agus an bhanríon, na ridirí, ár mbreitheamh'

A Predicate Pronoun immediately follows the Copula.

## IIIA. IF THE ANSWER/STATEMENT CONTAINS A PREDICATE PRONOUN:

An é seo an rí?                                      Is é.  
'Is the king this man?'                              'He is.'

Nach í sin an bhanríon?  
'Isn't that the queen?'                              Ní hí.  
'She isn't.'

An iad seo an rí agus an bhanríon?              Is iad.  
'Are these the king and the queen?'              'They are.'

Nach muidne na ridirí?  
'Aren't we the knights?'                              Ní sibh.  
'You aren't.'

Is sibhse na ministéirí.  
'You are the ministers.'

An tusa a mbreitheamh?                              Is mise.  
'Are you their judge?'                              'I am.'

'Copula + Predicate Pronoun' = 'is, ní + é, í, iad, sibhse, mise, mé' or 'Copula + Predicate Pronoun + Subject' = 'is + sibhse + na ministéirí'

In general, *is é/í/iad* and *ní hé/hí/hiad* can be used as minimal answers to the questions in II. above.<sup>17</sup> The *seo* or *sin* of the question need not be repeated in the answer for the same reasons outlined in IIa above.

If the Predicate Pronoun in the question is emphatic, the Predicate Pronoun in the answer is often emphatic as well. When the guess is wrong, the answer is usually a correction rather than a denial (i.e. the denial *ní sibhse na ministéirí* 'you are not the ministers' need not precede the correction *is sibhse na ridirí* 'you are the knights').

Warning: When this type of Copula construction contains a Predicate Pronoun, the syntax in Irish is totally different from the syntax in idiomatic English translation. Whereas the Irish syntax for a question, answer, or statement is 'Copula + Predicate + Subject', the English syntax for the question 'which is it?' is 'Predicate + Copula + Subject' and the English syntax for the answer/statement 'it is which' is 'Subject + Copula + Predicate'.

For example, *is iadsan na buaiteoirí* = 'Copula + Predicate Pronoun + Subject'. The most literal possible English translation is 'the winners are *they*' = 'Subject + Copula + Predicate Pronoun'. The idiomatic English translation

'they are the winners' = 'Subject Pronoun + Copula + Predicate' switches the positions and roles of the noun and pronoun, warping the Irish Predicate Pronoun *iadsan* into the English Subject Pronoun 'they' and the Irish Subject *na buaiteoirí* into the English Predicate 'the winners'. Learn the Irish syntax and the English syntax separately in order to avoid confusion.

#### EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND STATEMENTS:

Cén dráma é seo? 'Which play is this?'	Is é 'On Baile's Strand' é seo. <i>or</i> Seo é 'On Baile's Strand'. 'This is 'On Baile's Strand''
Cé hé an drámadóir? 'Who's the playwright?'	Is é William Butler Yeats an drámadóir. 'The playwright is William Butler Yeats.'
Cé hiad na príomhcharachtair? 'Who are the main characters?'	Is iad Conchubar, Cúchulain, an Fear Dall, agus an tAmadán na príomhcharachtair. 'The main characters are Conchubar, Cúchulain, the Blind Man, and the Fool.'
An é Cúchulain an rí? 'Is Cúchulain the king?'	Ní hé. Is é Conchubar an rí. 'He's not. Conchubar is the king.'
An é an tAmadán an cladhaire? 'Is the Fool the villain?'	Ní hé, is é an tAmadán an pleidhce. 'He's not, the Fool is the dupe.'
Nach eisean Conchubar? 'Isn't <i>he</i> Conchubar?'	Is eisean mac Chúchulain. 'He's Cúchulain's son.'
Nár bh é cara a athar é? 'Wouldn't he be his father's friend?'	Ba é, dá mbeadh aithne acu ar a chéile. 'He would be, if they recognized each other.'
Cérbh í a mháthair? 'Who was his mother?'	Ba í Aífe í. 'She was Aífe.'
Arbh í banríon Éireann í? 'Was she queen of Ireland?'	Níorbh í, ba í an banlaoch ab fhearr in Albain í. 'She was not, she was the best woman- warrior in Scotland.'
Nach í Emer bean Chúchulain? 'Isn't Emer Cúchulain's wife?'	Is í. Is í Aífe a leannán adhaltrach. 'She is. Aífe is his adulterous lover.'
An iadsan na laochra eile? 'Are <i>they</i> the other warriors?'	Is iadsan na laochra. ' <i>They</i> are the warriors.'
An é 'Baile's Strand' an áit sin? 'Is that place Baile's Strand?'	Is é. 'It is.'
An é seo an dráma is fearr leat? 'Is this your favorite play?'	Ní hé. 'It isn't.'

♥ These examples refer to the most accessible of the five plays William Butler Yeats wrote about the Irish hero Cúchulain. The other four are 'At the Hawk's Well', 'The Green Helmet', 'The Death of Cuchulain', and 'The Only Jealousy of Emer'.

## The Copula: Idioms with 'le' and 'do'

When the Copula is used with certain Simple Prepositions or Prepositional Pronouns, the combination translates idiomatically rather than literally. Some of the commonest Copula idioms are formed with *le* 'with, by' and *do* 'to, for'.

Ia. 'Copula + (*le* + Indirect Object) or (Prepositional Pronoun) + SUBJECT' expresses ownership. The owner is the Indirect Object of *le* and the item owned is the Subject. If the owner is a pronoun rather than a noun, '*le* + Indirect Object' is replaced with the appropriate prepositional pronoun. The Subject may be an indefinite, a definite, or a proper noun, or a pronoun.

An le bean éigin <u>an hata</u> seo? 'Is <u>this hat</u> some woman's?'	Ní le fear <u>é</u> sin. ' <u>That's</u> not a man's.'
Nach leis an mbean sin <u>é</u> ? 'Isn't <u>it</u> that woman's?'	Is le Bairbre <u>an ceann</u> sin. ' <u>That one</u> is Bairbre's.'
Cé leis <u>é</u> ? 'Whose is <u>it</u> ?'	Is léi <u>é</u> . ' <u>It's</u> hers.'

Ib. To emphasize the owner, use a PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN OF *LE* WITH AN EMPHATIC SUFFIX (see VI. *Emphatic Prepositional Pronouns in Pronouns: Types*).

Ar <u>leatsa</u> na hataí sin? 'Were those hats <u>yours</u> ?'	Níor <u>liomsa</u> iad sin. 'Those weren't <u>mine</u> .'
Nár <u>libhse</u> iad seo? 'Weren't these <u>yours</u> ?'	Ba <u>linne</u> ceann acu. 'One of them was <u>ours</u> .'
Ar <u>leisean</u> na cinn eile? 'Were the other ones <u>his</u> ?'	Ba <u>leosan</u> na cinn eile. 'The other ones were <u>theirs</u> .'

Ic. If the Indirect Object is qualified by *a<sup>L</sup>* 'his', *a<sup>h</sup>* 'her', *a<sup>E</sup>* 'their', or *ár<sup>E</sup>* 'our', the POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE COMBINES WITH *LE* to form *lena<sup>L</sup>* 'with his', *lena<sup>h</sup>* 'with her', *lena<sup>E</sup>* 'with their', and *lenár<sup>E</sup>* 'with our'.

An le d'athair an cóta mór? 'Is the overcoat your father's?'	Is le mo dheartháir é sin. 'That's my brother's.'
Nach <u>lenár</u> n-iníon na fáinní cluaise sin? 'Aren't those earrings <u>our</u> daughter's?'	Ní le bhur n-iníon, ach le bhur mac iad. 'They're not your daughter's, but your son's.'

II. 'Copula + Adjective or Substantive'<sup>18</sup> + (*le* + Indirect Object) or (Prepositional Pronoun) + SUBJECT' expresses a subjective opinion or sentiment. The person who holds the opinion or feels the sentiment is the Indirect Object. The item, action, situation, etc. that evokes the opinion or sentiment is the Subject.

Ar mhaith leat <u>cupán caife</u> ? 'Would you like a <u>cup of coffee</u> ?'	B'fhearr liomsa <u>cupán tae</u> . 'I would prefer a <u>cup of tea</u> .'
--	--

Nárbh oth libh bhur rogha?  
‘Didn’t you regret your choice?’

B’aoibhinn linn ár rogha!  
‘We were delighted with our choice!’

Nach olc léi rince?  
‘Doesn’t she dislike dancing?’

Is olc, ach is breá léi canadh.  
‘She does, but she enjoys singing.’

**IIIa. ‘Copula + Adjective or Substantive + *do* + Indirect Object + SUBJECT’ expresses an *objective fact*. The person or thing affected by the fact is the Indirect Object. The item, action, situation, etc. of which the fact is true is the Subject.**

Ar chóir dúinn imeacht go luath?  
‘Would it be proper for us to depart early?’

Ba chóir duitse, ach ní dóibhsean.  
‘It would be proper for *you*, but not for *them*.’

Nach dual do mhac an chait luch a mharú?  
‘Isn’t it natural for the cat’s son to kill a mouse?’

Is dual, ach is olc do luch a mharú féin!  
‘It is, but being killed is evil for a mouse!’

Ar léir di a dtuairim?  
‘Was their opinion clear to her?’

Ba léir, b’fhíor duit go n-aontódh sí leo.  
‘It was, you were right that she would agree with them.’

**IIIb. To emphasize the person affected, use a PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN OF *DO* WITH AN EMPHATIC SUFFIX** (see VI. *Emphatic Prepositional Pronouns in Pronouns: Types*).

Nár chóir dúinne an scéal a insint?  
‘Wouldn’t it be proper for us to tell the story?’

Ba chóir daoibhse fanacht in bhur dtost!  
‘It would be proper for you to keep quiet!’

An dual dise éisteacht leis?  
‘Is it natural for her to listen to him?’

Ní dual dise éisteacht le haon duine.  
‘It’s not natural for her to listen to anyone.’

Nach léir dóibhsean an fhírinne?  
‘Isn’t the truth clear to them?’

Ní léir domsa í.  
‘It’s not clear to me.’

**IIIc. If the Indirect Object is qualified by *a<sup>L</sup>* ‘his’, *a<sup>H</sup>* ‘her’, *a<sup>E</sup>* ‘their’, or *ár<sup>E</sup>* ‘our’, the POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE COMBINES WITH *DO* to form *dá<sup>L</sup>* ‘to his’, *dá<sup>H</sup>* ‘to her’, *dá<sup>E</sup>* ‘to their’, and *dár<sup>E</sup>* ‘to our’.**

Ar léir do na haithreacha an réiteach?  
‘Would the solution be clear to the fathers?’

B’fhéidir, ach níor léir dá glann é.  
‘Perhaps, but it wouldn’t be clear to their children.’

An dual dá cuid gruaige bheith ina seasamh díreach?  
‘Is it natural for her hair to be standing straight up?’

Ní dual, ach sin mar atá sí.  
‘It’s not, but that’s how it is.’

**IV. ‘Negative Copula + Adjective or Substantive + (*do* + Indirect Object) or (Prepositional Pronoun) + SUBJECT’ expresses an existing condition.**

The person or thing affected by the fact is the Indirect Object. The item, action, situation, etc. that generates the fact is the Subject. Common idioms of this type convey necessity and obligation.

An té nach bhfuil láidir, ní mór dó bheith glic.  
‘The person who isn’t strong must be clever.’

Nach foláir dó bheith lúthchosach freisin?  
‘Must he be fleet-footed too?’

♥ The first example rephrases the proverb *an té nach bhfuil láidir, caithfidh sé bheith glic* or *an té nach bhfuil láidir, ní foláir dó bheith glic*. *Caithfidh, ní foláir do*, and *ní mór do* all translate as ‘must’.

**EXAMPLES OF COPULA IDIOMS WITH *LE* AND *DO*:**

Nárbh fhéidir libh fanacht?  
‘Couldn’t you stay?’

B’fhéidir, ach ba leasc linn suí in bhur mbun.  
‘We could, but we would be reluctant to impose on you.’

Cogar, an gnách leisean cuairt a thabhairt orthu?  
‘Say, is it usual for him to visit them?’

Ní gnách, is fada leisean an turas.  
‘It’s not, he thinks the journey is long.’

An dóigh libh gur dheacair daoibh éisteacht leis seo?  
‘Do you think that it would be difficult for you to listen to this?’

Ní dóigh linn gur dheacair dúinne é, ach ní dóigh linn gurbh éasca dár gcairde é.  
‘We don’t think it would be difficult for us, but we don’t think it would be easy for our friends.’

Is dual dóibh gur gráin leo feall thar aon rud eile.  
‘It’s natural to them that they detest treachery more than anything else.’

Cén fáth nár dhual, agus daoine macánta iad?  
‘Why wouldn’t it be, since they’re honest people?’

Cheap seisean nárbh fholáir dá mac táille a íoc.  
‘He thought that her son had to pay a fine.’

Ní fíor dósan, níor ghá dá mac é a íoc faoi dheireadh.  
‘He’s wrong, her son didn’t have to pay it in the end.’

Murar mhiste leat, an gcuirfeá an taephota is fearr ar an mbord?  
‘If you wouldn’t mind, would you put the best teapot on the table?’

Níor mhiste liom ar chor ar bith, agus ba bhreá liom cabhrú leat.  
‘I wouldn’t mind at all, and I would be glad to help you.’



# The Copula: Emphasis

As its name implies – ‘copula’ is Latin for ‘a link’ – the **Copula** is a verb that links elements in a sentence. It is best known as a means of equating nouns with other nouns or with adjectives (see also *The Copula: ‘What is it?’~‘Which is it?’*) but it can also serve as the link between other types of words or even whole clauses. Because the Copula is unstressed (i.e. is not strongly pronounced), the first stressed element in a Copula construction is the element after the verb.<sup>19</sup> Consequently **you can emphasize any part of a question, answer, or statement by placing it immediately after the Copula and appending the rest of the question, answer, or statement as a relative clause** (see *Dependent Clauses: The Direct Relative~The Indirect Relative*). Emphasizing an element by moving it to the beginning of a sentence is known as **Fronting**, and the element thus emphasized will be referred to as the **Fronted Element**. While Fronting is not limited to Copula constructions, the Copula can be followed by the widest range of elements and so offers the greatest scope for emphasis.

**Whereas the verb after the Relative Particle is *always* in the appropriate tense or mood, the form of the Copula that precedes the Fronted Element may be in the present tense** even if it is not translated as the present tense, e.g. ‘was it she who called yesterday?’ can be either *arbh í a ghlaoigh inné?* or *an í a ghlaoigh inné?* Likewise, when the Relative Clause itself is a Copula expression, the relative form of the Copula is *always* in the appropriate tense or mood, but the form of the Copula preceding the Fronted Element may be in the present tense, e.g. ‘was it she whom he liked?’ can be either *arbh í ba mhaith leis* or *an í ba mhaith leis?*<sup>20</sup>

**When the Fronted Element is anything *except* a definite or a proper noun, the syntax for a question, answer, or statement is ‘Copula + Fronted Element + Relative Clause’.**

**When the Fronted Element is a definite or a proper noun, the syntax for a question, answer, or statement is ‘Copula + Proleptic Pronoun + Fronted Element + Relative Clause’.**

Since the Copula can *never* be immediately followed by a definite or a proper noun, a **Proleptic Pronoun must separate the Copula from the Predicate Noun**. Proleptic Pronouns exist only in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, *é/í* in the singular and *iad* in the plural. **The gender and number of the Predicate Noun dictate the gender and number of the Proleptic Pronoun, which is a purely grammatical ‘buffer’ and does not appear in translation.** A question or an answer/statement that contains both a Proleptic Pronoun and a Subject Pronoun contains the same pronoun twice. In *is iad na buaiteoirí iad* ‘they are the winners’, the first *iad* is a Proleptic Pronoun and is *not* translated, whereas the second *iad* is the Subject and is translated ‘they’.<sup>21</sup>

**The Fronted Element can be an indefinite, a definite, or a proper noun, an adjective, an adverb, a preposition or a prepositional pronoun.**

**Any Fronted Element can be followed by a *Direct* Relative Clause, but not all Fronted Elements can be followed by an *Indirect* Relative Clause.** This is because the Indirect Relative Particle is completed by a preposition, a

prepositional pronoun, or a possessive adjective, and realistically the antecedent of such words cannot be an adjective, an adverb, a preposition, or a prepositional pronoun. For the pseudo-exception, see IVb below.

## IA. COPULA + FRONTED PRONOUN + DIRECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:

An tú a chum *At Swim-Two-Birds*?  
‘Was it you who composed *At Swim-Two-Birds*?’

Ní mé, is iad siúd thall a chum é.  
‘Not I, it’s they over there who composed it.’

## IB. COPULA + FRONTED PRONOUN + INDIRECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:

Nach iadsan na daoine a ndearnadh údair díobh?  
‘Isn’t it they who became authors?’

Is iad, agus an fíor-údar, is eisean an té a ndéanfar carachtar sa scéal de.  
‘It’s they, and the real author, it’s he who will become a character in the story.’

## IIA. COPULA + FRONTED INDEFINITE NOUN + DIRECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:

An sióg a d’iompraítí i bpóca an Phúca?  
‘Is it a fairy that used to be carried in the Pooka’s pocket?’

An lámh aondathach a roinnfear ar an tSióg Mhaith?  
‘Is it a flush that will be dealt to the Good Fairy?’

## IB. COPULA + FRONTED INDEFINITE NOUN + INDIRECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:

Is i gcoill atá cónaí ar an bPúca.  
‘It’s in a wood that the Pooka dwells.’

Ní uimhreacha corra a dtugann sé a chion dóibh, ach uimhreacha cothroma.  
‘It’s not odd numbers to which he gives his affection, but even numbers.’

## IIIA. COPULA + PROLEPTIC PRONOUN + FRONTED DEFINITE OR PROPER NOUN + DIRECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:

Nár**bh** í áille na bruinnille a mheall Dermot Trellis?  
‘Wasn’t it the young woman’s beauty that beguiled Dermot Trellis?’

Is í a maitheas, áfach, a mheallann John Furriskey.  
‘It’s her goodness, however, that beguiles John Furriskey.’

An iad Sheila Lamont agus John Furriskey a phósfaidh faoi cheilt?  
‘Is it Sheila Lamont and John Furriskey who will marry secretly?’



### III.B. COPULA + PROLEPTIC PRONOUN + FRONTED DEFINITE OR PROPER NOUN + INDIRECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:

Ní hiad an bheirt bhuachaillí bó a raibh bua na filíochta acu.  
'It's not the two cowboys who had the gift of poetry.'

Is é a n-easpa maorgachta a mbíodh an tSióg Mhaith agus an Púca ag gearán fúithi.  
'It's their lack of dignity that the Good Fairy and the Pooka would complain about.'

An é Jem Casey a luaitear an dán 'A pint of plain is your only man' leis?  
'Is it Jem Casey to whom is ascribed "A pint of plain is your only man?"'

### IV.A. COPULA + ADJECTIVE + NOUN + DIRECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:<sup>22</sup>

An iomadúil na heireabaill atá ar éadaí an Phúca?  
'Are the tails that are on the Pooka's clothes numerous?''

Ní sásta an tSióg Mhaith a chaill ag an gcluiche cártaí.  
'The Good Fairy who lost at cards isn't happy.

### IV.B. COPULA + ADJECTIVE + INDIRECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:<sup>23</sup>

B'uafásach ar fhulaing Dermot Trellis.  
'All that Dermot Trellis suffered was unbearable.'

Is cóir a ndéanfar air, mar sin féin.  
'All that will be done to him is just, however.'

### V. COPULA + ADVERB + DIRECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:

Nach go díreach in am a dhóinn Teresa na leathanaigh?  
'Isn't it just in time that Teresa burns the pages?'

Is isteach sa teach a thiocfaidh Dermot Trellis ina dhiaidh sin.  
'It's into the house that Dermot Trellis will come after that.'

### VI. COPULA + PREPOSITION + DIRECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:

An le peann a shocraigh na carachtair a n-údar a mharú?  
'Is it with a pen that the characters decided to kill their author?'

Ní ina aonar a scríobhfadh Orlick Trellis scéal a ndíoltais.  
'It's not on his own that Orlick Trellis would write the story of their revenge.'

### VII. COPULA + PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN + DIRECT RELATIVE CLAUSE:

Is acu atá buntáiste an iontais ar dtús.  
'It's they who have the advantage of surprise at first.'

Is aige a bheidh an bua faoi dheireadh.  
'It's he who will win in the end.'

### EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, AND STATEMENTS:

Creideann an t-uncail gurb annamh a osclaíonn a nia leabhar ar chor ar bith.  
'The uncle believes that it's seldom that his nephew opens a book at all.'

An cuimhin leat, nach é 'Finn McCool' a bhí rómhór chun seasamh?  
'Do you remember, wasn't it Finn McCool who was too great for standing?'

An pilibín móna is fearr le Finn?  
'Is it a turf-pilibeen that Finn likes best?'

Deirtear gurb é bodach a raibh éadach gioblach air a chuir náire ar Fhinn.  
'It's said that it was a churl who had on ragged clothing who shamed Finn.'

Cén fáth gur ar Shuibhne a chuirfidh Rónán mallacht?  
'Why is it on Sweeney that Rónán will put a curse?'

Cheap mé gurbh é Cailleach an Mhuilinn a chuirfeadh ar buile arís é.  
'I thought it was the Hag of the Mill who would send him out of his mind again.'

An naomh a nglaohtar Moling air a bheannóidh é?  
'Is it a saint who's called Moling who will bless him?'

B'fhéidir nach in Éirinn a rugadh agus a tógadh Shorty Andrews agus Slug Willard.  
'It's probably not in Ireland that Shorty Andrews and Slug Willard were born and raised.'

Is uathu a theastaíodh gunnaí.  
'It's they who used to need guns.'

Is leo a throididís.  
'It's with them that they used to fight.'

An féidir gur aréir a bhí Dermot Trellis ina chodladh go sámh?  
'Is it possible that it's last night that Dermot Trellis was sleeping peacefully?'

An aontófá liom gur greannmhar a dtarlaíonn sa leabhar seo?  
'Would you agree with me that all that happens in this book is funny?'

♥ The examples in this subsection refer to events in *At Swim-Two-Birds* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1939), a novel by Flann O'Brien, alias Myles na gCopaleen, alias Brian O'Nolan, alias many others. His English and Irish writings are still in print thanks to Dalkey Archive Press, Mercier Press, and Plume.

# The Verbal Noun

## Features

The **Verbal Noun** is a form of the verb that has the grammatical traits of a noun and the meaning of a verb. Like a noun, the Verbal Noun can be feminine or masculine, singular or plural, nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, or vocative. Like a verb, the Verbal Noun denotes an activity or an instance of activity (e.g. *rith* 'running' or 'a run', *ceannach* 'buying' or 'a purchase', *smaoineamh* 'thinking' or 'a thought').

Unfortunately, **no ending or initial mutation unerringly identifies a Verbal Noun as a Verbal Noun**. Endings common to Verbal Nouns (e.g. *glanadh* 'cleaning' and *caitheamh* 'spending') are equally common to non-verbal nouns (e.g. *toradh* 'fruit' and *fuinneamh* 'energy'). A Verbal Noun is recognizable only from its grammatical context.

**To positively identify a word as a Verbal Noun**, first ascertain that the word is part of a Verbal-Noun Construction (see *The Verbal Noun: Functions*), then look up the word in a dictionary. Since Verbal Nouns have a bounteous assortment of endings, the probability of error in backforming<sup>24</sup> rivals the probability of death and taxes.

**Some Verbal Nouns can be assigned to a Noun Declension** on the basis of their genitive singulars,<sup>25</sup> and to the usual extent, the Noun Declension indicates gender and inflection for different cases and numbers. **The majority of Verbal Nouns, however, are irregular nouns** (see *Nouns: Irregular*) **that do not belong to any Noun Declension**.

The following list gives some idea of the range of endings in the N/A and genitive singular, and of Verbal Nouns that belong to Noun Declensions.

Note: **Some Verbal Nouns have two genitive singular forms**, one to signify the *concept of activity* (e.g. *béas caite éadaí* 'a custom of wearing clothes'), the other to signify an *instance of activity* (e.g. *tá tú ag baint caithimh as na héadaí sin* 'you are getting good wear out of those clothes'). The form that signifies the concept is usually irregular, while the form that signifies an instance usually belongs to a Noun Declension. In the examples below, where there are two forms of the genitive singular, the 'concept' genitive singular is given first, followed by the 'instance' genitive singular in parentheses.

2 <sup>nd</sup> P. Sg. Imperative	N/A Sg. of Verbal Noun	Gen. Sg. of Verbal Noun
<b>fan</b> 'stay'	fanacht	fanachta
<b>dúisigh</b> 'awake'	dúiseacht	dúiseachta
<b>codail</b> 'sleep'	codladh	codlata
<b>buail</b> 'beat'	bualadh	bualte
<b>bris</b> 'break'	briseadh	briste
<b>dún</b> 'shut'	dúnadh	dúnta

2 <sup>nd</sup> P. Sg. Imperative	N/A Sg. of Verbal Noun	Gen. Sg. of Verbal Noun
<b>tar</b> 'come'	teacht	teachta
<b>inis</b> 'tell'	insint	inste
<b>bain</b> 'extract'	baint	bainte
<b>fulaing</b> 'endure'	fulaingt	fulaingthe
<b>féach</b> 'look'	féachaint	féachana
<b>oscail</b> 'open'	oscailt	oscailte
<b>tabhair</b> 'give, bring'	tabhairt	tabhartha
<b>déan</b> 'do, make'	déanamh	déanta (déanaimh)
<b>caith</b> 'consume'	caitheamh	caite (caithimh)
<b>feic</b> 'see'	feiceáil	feiceála
<b>beannaigh</b> 'bless'	beannú	beannaithe
<b>fiafraigh</b> 'ask'	fiafraí	fiafraithe
<b>lig</b> 'allow'	ligean	ligthe (ligin)
<b>léigh</b> 'read'	léamh	léite (léimh)
<b>snámh</b> 'swim'	snámh	snámha
<b>rith</b> 'run'	rith	reatha
<b>siúil</b> 'walk'	siúl	siúlta (siúil)
<b>cuir</b> 'put'	cur	curtha (cuir)
<b>iasc</b> 'fish'	iascach	iascaigh
<b>ith</b> 'eat'	ithe	ite (ithe)
<b>abair</b> 'say'	rá	ráite (rá)
<b>lorg</b> 'seek'	lorg	lorgtha
<b>maigh</b> 'boast'	maíomh	maíte (maímh)
<b>oibrigh</b> 'work'	obair	oibre
<b>rinc</b> 'dance'	rince	rince
<b>sásaigh</b> 'satisfy'	sásamh	sásaimh
<b>téigh</b> 'go'	dul	dula
<b>imigh</b> 'depart'	imeacht	imeachta
<b>suigh</b> 'sit'	suí	suite (suí)
<b>tit</b> 'fall'	titim	titime

## Functions

Since it has gender, number, and case, **the Verbal Noun can have any grammatical role that a noun can have**. It can be the subject, object, or indirect object of another verb. It can be addressed in the vocative case. In the genitive case, it can qualify another noun. It can even be qualified by the definite article and/or by adjectives.

Nach mbuaileadh <u>an smaoineamh céanna</u> tú féin? [did not used to strike <u>the thought same</u> you self] 'Didn't <u>the same thought</u> used to strike yourself?'	Nominative Singular
Cathain a chuir tú <u>na smaointe sin</u> in iúl? [when that put you <u>those thoughts</u> in knowledge] 'When did you make <u>those thoughts</u> known?'	Accusative Plural
Bhainfeadh brí <u>an smaoinimh sin</u> geit asat. [would extract significance of <u>that thought</u> a start out of you]	Genitive Singular

'The significance of that thought would startle you.'

Cuir síos ar do smaointe deireanacha, le do thoil.  
[put down on your thoughts last by your will]  
'Describe your last thoughts, please.'

Dative Plural

A smaoinimh, ná teip orm!  
[O thought do not fail on me]  
'Thought, don't fail me!'

Vocative Singular

**The Verbal Noun is used to convey every sense of the verb that cannot be conveyed by a conjugated form.** A conjugated verb-form describes a *specific performance of activity*, one event with a beginning and an end (e.g. *an gceannófá nuachtán?* 'would you buy a newspaper?', *ceannaíodh é* 'it was bought'). **The Verbal Noun expresses the concept of activity that corresponds to the present participle or the infinitive in English** (e.g. *tá siad á cheannach* 'they are buying it', *ba mhaith linn nuachtán a cheannach freisin!* 'we would also like to buy a newspaper!', *nach bhfaca sibh nuachtán le ceannach áit ar bith?* 'didn't you see a newspaper to buy anywhere?').

No single word in Irish is equivalent to either the present participle or the infinitive. The duties of both are performed by the Verbal Noun, for which Irish has developed special grammatical constructions. **The precise sense of the Verbal Noun – and its English translation – is revealed by the words that accompany it and the order in which they occur.** Once you have recognized a Verbal Noun, observe whether it stands alone, precedes a noun in the genitive case, or follows a simple preposition, a possessive adjective, or a noun in the dative case.

The commonest Verbal-Noun Constructions are explained below, in the following format:

Essentials of the Verbal Noun Construction (Additional Possible Elements)

Basic sense of the Verbal-Noun Construction, special requirements for words other than the Verbal Noun; English translation of the Verbal Noun.

Example of the Verbal-Noun Construction  
[literal translation of the example]  
'idiomatic translation of the example'

**Note: When the simple prepositions *do*, *ag*, or *a* are used to connect an object and a Verbal Noun**, they are to a large extent interchangeable and all three translate literally as 'at' (when Verbal Noun = present participle) or 'to' (when Verbal Noun = infinitive).

#### ***ag* + Verbal Noun (+ Object)**

Indicates activity in progress, and if there is an object, the object is a noun in the *genitive* case (if the object is a pronoun, see ***do* + Possessive Adjective + Verbal Noun** below); the Verbal Noun translates as the present participle.

Chonaic mé Áine ag ithe sa bhialann.  
[saw I Áine eating in the restaurant]  
'I saw Áine eating in the restaurant.'

Chonaic mé Áine ag ithe seacláide sa bhialann.  
[saw I Áine at eating of chocolate in the restaurant]  
'I saw Áine eating chocolate in the restaurant.'

#### ***do*<sup>26</sup> + Possessive Adjective + Verbal Noun**

Indicates activity in progress, with the possessive adjective referring to a *pronoun object*; the Verbal Noun translates as the present participle.

Tá an sagart do mo bheannú.  
[is the priest at my blessing]  
'The priest is blessing me.'

Bíonn an sagart do do bheannú.  
[does be the priest at your blessing]  
'The priest does be blessing you.'

Bhí an sagart á beannú.  
[was the priest at her blessing]  
'The priest was blessing her.'

Bhíodh an sagart á bheannú.  
[used to be the priest at his blessing]  
'The priest used to be blessing him.'

Bheadh an sagart dár mbeannú.  
[would be the priest at our blessing]  
'The priest would be blessing us.'

Beidh an sagart do bhur mbeannú.  
[will be the priest at your blessing]  
'The priest will be blessing you.'

Bíodh an sagart á mbeannú!  
[let be the priest at their blessing]  
'Let the priest be blessing them!'

#### **Object + *a*<sup>1</sup> + Verbal Noun**

Indicates activity to be inflicted on a noun or object pronoun; the Verbal Noun translates as the infinitive.

Níor mhór dúinn ár madra a thógáil abhaile.  
[was not great to us our dog to take homeward]  
'We had to take our dog home.'

Cuimhnígí ar é a chur ar iall.  
[remember him to put on a leash]  
'Remember to put him on a leash.'

An féidir leis an fál a léim?  
[is it possible with him the fence to leap?]  
'Can he leap the fence?'

#### ***le*<sup>h</sup> + Verbal Noun**

Indicates potential or intended activity; the Verbal Noun translates as the infinitive or as the passive infinitive (i.e. 'to be done' rather than 'to do'), depending on the idiom in English.

Nach bhfuil aiste le scríobh agat inniu?  
[is not an essay with writing at you today]  
'Don't you have an essay to write today?'

Ní raibh fuaim le cloisteáil sa leabharlann.  
[was not a sound with hearing in the library]  
'There wasn't a sound to be heard in the library.'

#### Verbal Noun

Completes the meaning of conjugated verbs or copula constructions; the Verbal Noun translates as the infinitive.

D'iarr siad orainn fanacht sa bhaile.  
[asked they on us staying home]  
'They asked us to stay home.'

Ach ba mhian linn dul in éineacht leo.  
[but was a desire with us going along with them]  
'But we wanted to go along with them.'

#### gan + (Object + a<sup>l</sup> +) Verbal Noun

Indicates a negative command in indirect speech; the Verbal Noun translates as the infinitive.

D'impigh sé orainn gan corraí.  
[he implored on us without moving]  
'He implored us not to move.'

An iarrfar oraibh gan bróga a chaitheamh sa teach?  
[will be asked of you without shoes to wear in the house]  
'Will you be asked not to wear shoes in the house?'

Dúradh leis gan é a rá.  
[was said to him without it to say]  
'He was told not to say it.'

#### chun/le<sup>h</sup> + (Object +) Verbal Noun

Indicates intended activity, and if there is an object, the object is a noun in the *dative* case; the Verbal Noun translates as the infinitive.

Fillfimid ar maidin chun ithe. *or*  
Fillfimid ar maidin le hithe.  
[will return we on the morning toward/with eating]  
'We will return in the morning to eat.'

Fillfimid ar maidin chun bricfeasta a ithe. *or*  
Fillfimid ar maidin le bricfeasta a ithe.  
[will return we on the morning toward/with breakfast to eat]  
'We will return in the morning to eat breakfast.'

#### i<sup>27</sup>+ Possessive Adjective + Verbal Noun

Indicates a state of being, with the possessive adjective referring to the subject of the sentence; the Verbal Noun translates idiomatically with *i*.

Bhídís ina gcónaí amuigh faoin tír.  
[they used to be in their living in the country]  
'They used to live in the country.'

Nuair a bheidh sí ina banaltra, oibreoidh sí san ospidéal.  
[when will be she in her nurse, will work she in the hospital]  
'When she is a nurse, she will work in the hospital.'

Fan in bhur seasamh.  
[remain in your standing]  
'Remain standing.'

#### ar + Verbal Noun

Indicates the condition of the subject of the sentence; the Verbal Noun translates idiomatically with *ar* and is usually immune to lenition.

Beidh d'athair ar buile nuair a chloiseann sé an scéal seo!  
[will be your father on a frenzy when hears he this story]  
'Your father will be furious when he hears this story!'

Dúirt an chomharsa go raibh tú ar meisce aréir.  
[said the neighbor that were you on drunkenness last night]  
'The neighbor said you were drunk last night.'

# The Definite Article

The Definite Article ‘the’ has two forms, *an* and *na*. The form and the mutation it causes depend on the number, gender, case, and initial letter of the noun it modifies.

Masculine		Feminine			
	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural
N/A	an <sup>t</sup>	na <sup>h</sup>	N/A	an <sup>l</sup>	na <sup>h</sup>
G	an <sup>l</sup>	na <sup>E</sup>	G	na <sup>h</sup>	na <sup>E</sup>
D	an <sup>E</sup>	na <sup>h</sup>	D	an <sup>E</sup>	na <sup>h</sup>

Note: *De, do, faoi, ó, and i* combine with the singular Definite Article into *den<sup>l</sup>, don<sup>l</sup>, faoin<sup>E</sup>, ón<sup>E</sup>* and *sa<sup>l</sup>/san<sup>l</sup>*. *Le* and *trí* change form before the singular Definite Article to make *leis an<sup>E</sup>* and *tríd an<sup>E</sup>*.<sup>28</sup> *I* combines with the plural Definite Article into *sna*.

Masculine Noun with Initial Consonant		Feminine Noun with Initial Consonant			
<b>bord</b> ‘table’		<b>cathaoir</b> ‘chair’			
	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural
N/A	an bord ‘the table’	na boird ‘the tables’	N/A	an chathaoir ‘the chair’	na cathaoireacha ‘the chairs’
G	an <u>b</u> hoird ‘of the table’	na <u>m</u> bord ‘of the tables’	G	na cathaoireach ‘of the chair’	na <u>g</u> cathaoireacha ‘of the chairs’
D	faoin <u>m</u> bord ‘under the table’	faoi na boird ‘under the tables’	D	ar an <u>g</u> cathaoir ‘on the chair’	ar na cathaoireacha ‘on the chairs’

Masculine Noun with Initial ‘d’ or ‘t’		Feminine Noun with Initial ‘d’ or ‘t’			
<b>doras</b> ‘door’		<b>tír</b> ‘country’			
	Singular	Plural		Singular	Plural
N/A	an doras ‘the door’	na doirse ‘the doors’	N/A	an tír <sup>29</sup> ‘the country’	na tíortha ‘the countries’
G	an dorais <sup>29</sup> ‘of the door’	na <u>n</u> doirse ‘of the doors’	G	na tíre ‘of the country’	na <u>d</u> tíortha ‘of the countries’
D	ag an doras <sup>29</sup> ‘at the door’	ag na doirse ‘at the doors’	D	ón tír <sup>29</sup> ‘from the country’	ó na tíortha ‘from the countries’

Masculine Noun with Initial ‘s + Vowel’  
**saoi** ‘sage, wise person’

	Singular	Plural
N/A	an saoi ‘the sage’	na saoi <sup>h</sup> ‘the sages’
G	an <u>ts</u> aoi <sup>31</sup> ‘of the sage’	na saoi <sup>h</sup> ‘of the sages’
D	don saoi <sup>29</sup> ‘to the sage’	do na saoi <sup>h</sup> ‘to the sages’

Feminine Noun with Initial ‘s + Vowel’  
**súil** ‘eye’

	Singular	Plural
N/A	an <u>ts</u> úil <sup>30</sup> ‘the eye’	na súile ‘the eyes’
G	na súile ‘of the eye’	na súil ‘of the eyes’
D	sa <u>ts</u> úil <sup>30</sup> ‘in the eye’	sna súile ‘in the eyes’

Masculine Noun with Initial ‘s + l/n/r’  
**sruth** ‘stream’

	Singular	Plural
N/A	an sruth ‘the stream’	na sruthanna ‘the streams’
G	an <u>ts</u> ru <sup>h</sup> tha <sup>31</sup> ‘of the stream’	na sruthanna ‘of the streams’
D	tríd an sruth <sup>29</sup> ‘through the stream’	trí na sruthanna ‘through the streams’

Feminine Noun with Initial ‘s + l/n/r’  
**snaidhm** ‘knot’

	Singular	Plural
N/A	an <u>ts</u> naidhm <sup>30</sup> ‘the knot’	na snaidhmeanna ‘the knots’
G	na snaidhme ‘of the knot’	na snaidhmeanna ‘of the knots’
D	leis an <u>ts</u> naidhm <sup>30</sup> ‘with the knot’	leis na snaidhmeanna ‘with the knots’

Masculine Noun with Initial ‘s + Consonant’  
**scáth** ‘shadow’

	Singular	Plural
N/A	an scáth ‘the shadow’	na scáthanna ‘the shadows’
G	an scátha ‘of the shadow’	na scáthanna ‘of the shadows’
D	sa scáth ‘in the shadow’	sna scáthanna ‘in the shadows’

Feminine Noun with Initial ‘s + Consonant’  
**spéir** ‘sky’

	Singular	Plural
N/A	an spéir ‘the sky’	na spéartha ‘the skies’
G	na spéire ‘of the sky’	na spéartha ‘of the skies’
D	as an spéir ‘out of the sky’	as na spéartha ‘out of the skies’

Masculine Noun with Initial ‘f + Vowel’  
**fógra** ‘notice’

	Singular	Plural
N/A	an fógra ‘the notice’	na fógraí ‘the notices’
G	an <u>fh</u> ógra ‘of the notice’	na <u>bh</u> fógraí ‘of the notices’
D	san <u>fh</u> ógra ‘in the notice’	sna fógraí ‘in the notices’

Feminine Noun with Initial ‘f + Vowel’  
**fiacail** ‘tooth’

	Singular	Plural
N/A	an <u>fh</u> iacail ‘the tooth’	na fiacail ‘the teeth’
G	na fiacaile ‘of the tooth’	na <u>bh</u> fiacail ‘of the teeth’
D	ar an <u>bh</u> fiacail ‘on the tooth’	ar na fiacail ‘on the teeth’



Masculine Noun with Initial 'f + l/r'		Feminine Noun with Initial 'f + l/r'	
<b>freagra</b> 'answer'		<b>fleasc</b> 'rod'	
<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
N/A an freagra 'the answer'	na freagraí 'the answers'	N/A an fhleasc 'the rod'	na fleasca 'the rods'
G an fhreagra 'of the answer'	na bhfreagraí 'of the answers'	G na fleisce 'of the rod'	na bhfleasc 'of the rods'
D leis an bhfreagra 'with the answer'	leis na freagraí 'with the answers'	D faoin bhfleasc 'under the rod'	faoi na fleasca 'under the rods'
Masculine Noun with Initial Vowel		Feminine Noun with Initial Vowel	
<b>iasc</b> 'fish'		<b>ubh</b> 'egg'	
<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>	<b>Singular</b>	<b>Plural</b>
N/A an t-iasc 'the fish'	na héisc 'the fish'	N/A an ubh 'the egg'	na huibheacha 'the eggs'
G an éisc 'of the fish'	na n-iasc 'of the fish'	G na huibhe 'of the egg'	na n-uibheacha 'of the eggs'
D den iasc 'off the fish'	de na héisc 'off the fish'	D as an ubh 'out of the egg'	as na huibheacha 'out of the eggs'

# Nouns

## Types

There are three types of nouns: Indefinite, Definite, and Proper.

An **Indefinite Noun** is an example of a category; it is not uniquely distinguished from other nouns with the same traits. It can be qualified by any adjective except a possessive adjective and even by prepositional phrases (e.g. *rón mór liath* 'a big gray seal', *dobharchúnna fiáine in aibhneacha iargúlta* 'wild otters in remote rivers'). Note that in English, a singular Indefinite Noun is preceded by the Indefinite Article 'a' or 'an' (e.g. 'a big gray seal') while a plural Indefinite Noun is preceded by nothing (e.g. 'wild otters'). Since Irish has no Indefinite Article, **Indefinite Nouns in Irish are preceded by nothing** (e.g. *rón mór liath*, *dobharchúnna fiáine*).

A **Definite Noun** is individualized; it is uniquely distinguished from all other nouns, including those that have the same traits. Like an Indefinite Noun, it can be qualified by any adjective or phrase, but a **Definite Noun is set apart by the Definite Article** (e.g. *an rón mór liath* 'the big gray seal', *na dobharchúnna fiáine in aibhneacha iargúlta* 'the wild otters in remote rivers'), **the Definite Article and a demonstrative pronoun** (e.g. *an rón mór liath seo* 'this big gray seal', *na dobharchúnna fiáine sin* 'those wild otters'), **or a possessive adjective**, which may be supplemented by *féin* 'own' or an emphatic suffix (e.g. *mo rón mór liath féin* 'my own big gray seal', *do dhobharchúnna fiáinese* 'your wild otters').

A **Proper Noun** is a **capitalized name** denoting a person, an animal, a location, or an object. This vast category includes first names and surnames (e.g. *Síle* 'Sheila', *Mac Mathúna* 'McMahon'), nicknames and titles (e.g. *Cailleach Bhéarra* 'Old Woman of Beare'), street names (e.g. *Sráid Uí Chonaill* 'O'Connell Street'), countries and cities (e.g. *Éire* 'Ireland', *Corcaigh* 'Cork'), landmarks (e.g. *Brú na Bóinne* 'Newgrange'), names of stories and publications (e.g. *Táin Bó Cuailnge* 'Cattle-Raid of Cooley', *Iris Nua Éireannach* 'New Hibernia Review').

## Nouns: Gender, Number, Case

The key characteristics of a noun are Gender, Number, and Case.

**Gender** indicates whether a noun is feminine or masculine.

**Number** indicates whether a noun is singular or plural.

**Case** indicates the grammatical role of a noun. There are five cases in Irish:

Noun Case	Grammatical Role of a Noun in That Case
<b>Nominative/Subjective</b>	subject – performer of the action
<b>Accusative/Objective</b>	direct object – recipient of the action

<b>Dative</b>	indirect object – beneficiary of the action
<b>Genitive</b>	describes a preceding noun or completes the meaning of a preceding phrase (see <i>Nouns: The Genitive Case</i> )
<b>Vocative</b>	addressee – the person or thing being spoken to

#### EXAMPLES OF NOUNS IN THE NOMINATIVE CASE:

Nuair a bhíonn an cat as baile, bíonn an luch ag rince.  
‘When the cat is away, the mouse is dancing.’

Is gaire cabhair Dé ná an doras.  
‘God’s help is nearer than the door.’

#### EXAMPLES OF NOUNS IN THE ACCUSATIVE CASE:

Má bhuaileann tú mo mhadra, buailfidh tú mé.  
‘If you hit my dog, you will hit me.’

Ná gearradh do theanga do scornach.  
‘Let not your tongue cut your throat.’

#### EXAMPLES OF NOUNS IN THE GENITIVE CASE:

Is maith an scáthán súil charad.  
‘A friend’s eye is a good mirror.’

Ith smior mairt is bí tapaídh,  
Ith smior muice is bí mór meata.  
‘Eat beef marrow and be nimble,  
Eat pork marrow and be feeble.’

Tús maith leath na hoibre.  
‘A good start is half the work.’

#### EXAMPLES OF NOUNS IN THE DATIVE CASE:

Níl aon leigheas ar an ngará ach pósadh.  
‘There’s no cure for love except marriage.’

Mura gcuirfidh tú san earrach ní bhainfidh tú san fhómhar.  
‘If you do not sow in the spring, you will not reap in the autumn.’

#### EXAMPLES OF NOUNS IN THE VOCATIVE CASE:

‘Siúil díreach, a mhic’ – mar a dúirt an seanphortán leis an bportán óg.  
‘Walk straight, son’ – as the old crab said to the young crab.

Mair, a chapaill, agus gheobhaidh tú féar.  
‘Live, horse, and you will get grass.’

☛ All of the preceding examples are proverbs. *Nuair a bhíonn an cat as baile, bíonn an luch ag rince* also appears as *nuair a bhíonn an cat as baile, bíonn an luch ag damhsa*, Munster Irish preferring *rince* and Donegal Irish *damhsa* for the verbal noun ‘dancing’; *as baile* ‘away [from home]’ may

also be replaced by *amuigh* ‘outside’. The American and Hiberno-English equivalent is ‘While the cat’s away, the mice will play.’ *Má bhuaileann tú mo mhadra buailfidh tú mé* is similar to ‘Love me, love my dog.’ *Ná gearradh do theanga do scornach* warns a person against talking too freely because his own words can get him into trouble.

Caution: Irish and English are such different languages that a sentence in Irish and its translation in English rarely contain the same nouns in the same cases, the same verbs, or the same anything else. **Often the Irish contains elements that do not appear in the translation while the translation contains elements that do not appear in the Irish.** Here are two examples:

<b>Tá</b> verb	<b>leabhar</b> subject (Nominative Case)	<b>agam.</b> prepositional pronoun		
<b>‘I</b> subject (Nominative Case)	<b>have</b> verb	<b>a</b> indefinite article	<b>book.</b> object (Accusative Case)	
<b>an</b> definite article	<b>leabhar</b> subject (Nominative Case)	<b>atá</b> direct relative particle <i>a</i>	<b>agam</b> prepositional pronoun plus verb <i>tá</i>	
<b>‘the</b> definite article	<b>book</b> object (Accusative Case)	<b>that</b> relative pronoun	<b>I</b> subject (Nominative Case)	<b>have’</b> verb

## Nouns: Uses of the Genitive Case

In Irish the **Genitive Case** is used to express *any* relationship between two consecutive nouns that are *not* linked by a verb.<sup>32</sup> The first noun may be in any case, depending on its grammatical role in the question, answer, or statement. The second noun must be in the Genitive Case in order to establish its relationship with the first noun. The first noun is said to ‘govern’ the second noun in the Genitive Case.

Just as it is *sometimes* possible to avoid the Copula (see *Irregular Verbs: Substantive vs. Copula*), it is *sometimes* possible to avoid the Genitive Case.<sup>33</sup> But like the Copula, the Genitive Case is required in so many situations – after nouns, Verbal Nouns, Compound Prepositions, and certain Simple Prepositions – that trying to speak or write Irish without using nouns in the Genitive Case is more futile than trying to make a cambric shirt without seams or needlework. The Genitive Case is so central to the language that a noun’s declension is determined by its *genitive* singular, regardless of its forms in the nominative, accusative, dative, and vocative.

The following list describes categories of information that a noun in the Genitive Case can provide about the noun it follows. **Unless the first noun is prepositional, it is always correct to place ‘of’ in front of the second word as a literal translation** until you are certain of the idiomatic translation.

For an explanation of mutations in the following examples, see *Nouns: Mutations*.

1) origin:

torthaí <u>crainn</u>	[fruits <u>of a tree</u> ]	'a <u>tree's</u> fruits'
siol <u>blátha</u>	[seed <u>of a flower</u> ]	'a <u>flower</u> seed'
iníon <u>Bharra</u>	[daughter <u>of Barra</u> ]	' <u>Barra's</u> daughter'

2) ownership:

bialann <u>Shiobhán</u>	[restaurant <u>of Siobhán</u> ]	' <u>Siobhán's</u> restaurant'
éadaí <u>na bpáistí</u>	[clothes <u>of the children</u> ]	' <u>the children's</u> clothes'
cait <u>ár gcomharsan</u>	[cats <u>of our neighbor</u> ]	' <u>our neighbor's</u> cats'

3) composition:

peann <u>luaidhe</u>	[pen <u>of lead</u> ]	'a <u>pencil</u> '
croí <u>gloine</u>	[heart <u>of glass</u> ]	'a <u>glass</u> heart'
cosa <u>créafóige</u>	[feet <u>of clay</u> ]	' <u>clay</u> feet'

4) contents:

bosca <u>gainimh</u>	[box <u>of sand</u> ]	'a <u>sandbox</u> '
buidéal <u>bainne</u>	[bottle <u>of milk</u> ]	'a <u>milk</u> bottle' <sup>34</sup>

5) kind:

lá <u>samhraidh</u>	[day <u>of summer</u> ]	'a <u>summer's</u> day'
Oíche <u>Shamhna</u>	[night <u>of Halloween</u> ]	' <u>Halloween</u> night'
maidin <u>sheaca</u>	[morning <u>of frost</u> ]	'a <u>frosty</u> morning'
máthair <u>shúigh</u>	[mother <u>of suction</u> ]	'a <u>squid</u> '

6) magnitude:

pá <u>lae</u>	[pay <u>of a day</u> ]	'a <u>day's</u> pay'
garsún <u>bliana</u>	[boy <u>of a year</u> ]	'a <u>year-old</u> boy'
práta <u>puint</u>	[potato <u>of one pound</u> ]	'a <u>one-pound</u> potato'

7) value:

ticéad <u>puint</u>	[ticket <u>of one pound</u> ]	'a <u>one-pound</u> ticket'
stampa <u>pingine</u>	[a stamp <u>of one cent</u> ]	'a <u>one-cent</u> stamp'

8) use:

seomra <u>codlata</u>	[room <u>of sleeping</u> ]	'bedroom'
teach <u>ósta</u>	[house <u>of lodging</u> ]	'an inn'

9) occupation:

bean <u>an tí</u>	[woman <u>of the house</u> ]	'housewife'
mac <u>léinn</u>	[lit. son <u>of study</u> ]	'student'
cailín <u>aimsire</u>	[girl <u>of service</u> ]	'maid'

10) position:

cos <u>deiridh</u>	[a leg <u>of an end</u> ]	'a <u>hind</u> leg'
gluaisteán <u>tosaigh</u>	[a car <u>of a beginning</u> ]	'a car <u>in front</u> '

11) part of a larger whole:

mo chuid <u>éadaí</u>	[my share <u>of clothes</u> ]	'my <u>clothes</u> '
roinnt <u>aráin</u>	[a share <u>of bread</u> ]	'some <u>bread</u> '

12) proper name:

Sráid <u>Uí Néill</u>	[Street <u>of O'Neill</u> ]	' <u>O'Neill</u> Street'
Coláiste <u>Bhríde</u>	[College <u>of St. Bridget</u> ]	' <u>St. Bridget's</u> College'

13) object of a Verbal Noun:

ag ithe <u>seacláide</u>	[at eating <u>of chocolate</u> ]	'eating <u>chocolate</u> '
ag léamh <u>an leabhair</u>	[at reading <u>of the book</u> ]	'reading <u>the book</u> '

14) object of a Compound Preposition:

ar chúl <u>an tí</u>	'behind <u>the house</u> '
de réir <u>dlí</u>	'according to <u>law</u> '
Oisín i ndiaidh <u>na Féinne</u>	'Oisín after <u>the Fianna</u> '
ar fud <u>na hÉireann</u>	'throughout <u>Ireland</u> '

15) object of *chun* 'to, toward', *trasna* 'across', *timpeall* 'around', *fearacht* 'like', *cois* 'beside', or *dála* 'as, concerning':

ag dul <u>chun na farraige</u>	'going toward <u>the sea</u> '
trasna <u>an bhóthair</u>	'across <u>the road</u> '
timpeall <u>an chnoic</u>	'around <u>the hill</u> '
fearacht a <u>máthar</u>	'like <u>her mother</u> '
cois <u>na habhann</u>	'beside <u>the river</u> '
dála <u>an scéil</u>	'according to <u>the story</u> '

## Nouns: Plurals

Irish has two types of plurals: Strong and Weak. The formation of the plural depends on 1) whether the plural is Strong or Weak, and 2) the declension to which the noun belongs, because noun declensions form plurals in different ways (for the details of 2, see *Strong Plurals~Weak Plurals* in *Noun Declensions*).

A **Strong Plural** is the same in all grammatical cases.

Example of a Strong Plural:

Bhí na soilse rógheal dá shúile                      Nominative Plural  
'The lights were too bright for his eyes.'

An bhfaca sibh na soilse sin?                      Accusative Plural  
'Did you see those lights?'

Tá loinnir na soilse rógheal.                      Genitive Plural  
'The glare of the lights is too bright.'

Cé mhéad airgid a thug tú ar na soilse?                      Dative Plural  
'How much money did you pay for the lights?'

A shoilse, go dtaitní sibh go deo!                      Vocative Plural  
'Lights, may you shine forever!'

A **Weak Plural** has at least two different forms, one for the N/A plural, dative plural, and sometimes the vocative plural, and one for the genitive plural *only*.

Example of a **Weak Plural**:

Léimfidh caoirigh an fál. Nominative Plural  
'Sheep will jump the fence.'

An bhfaca sibh na caoirigh sin? Accusative Plural  
'Did you see those sheep?'

Tá olann na gcaorach an-bhán. Genitive Plural  
'The wool of the sheep is very white.'

Cé mhéad airgid a thug tú ar na caoirigh? Dative Plural  
'How much money did you pay for the sheep?'

A chaoirigh, go dtaga sibh slán abhaile! Vocative Plural  
'Sheep, may you come safely home!'

P.S. If you think Irish plurals are arbitrary and difficult to learn, consider the plurals of English words such as 'mouse', 'fish', 'leaf', 'tooth', 'potato', 'body', and 'ox', then repent at leisure.

## Nouns: Declensions

To **Decline a Noun** is to change the form of the noun to reflect its number and case.

### EXAMPLES OF DECLINED NOUNS:

Ní fhásann fíonchaora ar chrainn. fíonchaora = nom. pl. of *fíonchaor* 'grape'  
'Grapes don't grow on trees.' crainn = dat. pl. of *crann* 'tree'

Cén saghas éin é sin? saghas = nom. sg. of *saghas* 'type'  
'What type of bird is that?' éin = gen. sg. of *éan* 'bird'

Éirigh as an ngearán, a mhic! gearán = dat. sg. of *gearán* 'complaining'  
'Stop complaining, son!' a mhic = voc. sg. of *mac* 'son'

Doirteadh deochanna i gcomhair deochanna = acc. pl. of *deoch* 'drink'  
na gcuairteoirí. cuairteoirí = gen. pl. of *cuairteoir* 'guest'  
'Drinks were poured for the visitors.'

A dhaoine uaisle, an dtabharfaidh a dhaoine uaisle = voc. pl. of *duine uasal*  
sibh bhur gcótaí dom? 'gentleman'  
'Gentlemen, will you give me your coats?' gcótaí = acc. pl. of *cóta* 'coat'

A **Noun Declension** is a group of nouns that are declined according to the same pattern. Since most nouns have one form for the nominative, accusative, and dative in the singular, and likewise one form for the nominative, accusative, and dative in the plural, **declensions are distinguished primarily by the formation of the genitive singular**. Other

defining features include gender, formation of the vocative, and formation of plurals.

**Regular Nouns** are nouns that belong to a **Noun Declension**. Nouns that do not belong to a Noun Declension are discussed in *Nouns: Irregular*.

### IN THE FOLLOWING CHARTS OF NOUN DECLENSIONS:

- 1) Because all nouns have the same form in the Nominative and Accusative Singular, and the same form in the Nominative and Accusative Plural, each of these is given only once as the **N/A Singular** or **N/A Plural**. Forms for the Genitive, and Vocative Singular and Plural vary enough to be listed separately. Some Dative usages are also given.
- 2) Each Noun Declension is described in terms of its Characteristics, Formation of the Genitive Singular, and Formation of Plurals.

## Nouns: First Declension

### Characteristics

**Masculine**

**N/A Singular has a broad final consonant**

**Genitive Singular has a slender final consonant**

**Vocative Plural has final 'a'**

**Genitive Singular and Vocative Singular are the same**

### Formation of the Genitive Singular

- 1) Insert 'i' before final consonant/s:

corn 'a horn' ⇒ coir*n* 'of a horn'

ball 'organ [of the body]' ⇒ baill 'of an organ'

- 2) Change the internal vowels:

**ea** ⇒ **i** fear 'a man' ⇒ fir 'of a man'

**éa** ⇒ **éi** éan 'a bird' ⇒ éin 'of a bird'

**ia** ⇒ **éi** iasc 'a fish' ⇒ éisc 'of a fish'

**íó** ⇒ **í** coinníoll 'a condition' ⇒ coinnill 'of a condition'

- 3) Change the final **-ach/-each** of polysyllabics to **-aigh/-igh**:

**-ach** ⇒ **-aigh** bacach 'a beggar' ⇒ bakaigh 'of a beggar'

**-each** ⇒ **-igh** cuilceach 'a [male] rascal' ⇒ cuilcigh 'of a rascal'

### Weak Plurals

**N/A Singular and Genitive Plural are the same.**

**Genitive Singular and N/A Plural may be the same.**

When the noun is preceded by the definite article, observe whether the definite article is singular or plural, and whether it causes **lenition (genitive singular), eclipsis (genitive plural)**, or has **no effect (N/A singular or plural)**.

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	N/A Pl.	Gen. Pl.
bád 'a boat' an bád 'the boat'	báid 'of a boat' an bháid 'of the boat'	báid 'boats' na báid 'the boats'	bád 'of boats' na mbád 'of the boats'
úll 'an apple' an t-úll 'the apple'	úill 'of an apple' an úill 'of the apple'	úlla 'apples' na húlla 'the apples'	úll 'of apples' na n-úll 'of the apples'

## Strong Plurals

When the noun is preceded by the definite article, observe whether the definite article **eclipses (genitive plural)** or has **no effect (N/A plural)**.

### STRONG PLURALS ARE FORMED BY:

a) Adding **-anna** to monosyllabic nouns:

blas 'taste' ⇒ blasanna 'tastes' or 'of tastes'  
taobh 'side' ⇒ taobhanna 'sides' or 'of sides'

b) Adding **-tha** to monosyllables with final 'r':

glór 'voice' ⇒ glórtha 'voices' or 'of voices'  
tuar 'omen' ⇒ tuartha 'omens' or 'of omens'

c) Adding **-ta** to monosyllables with a long vowel or a diphthong, and final 'l' or 'n':

néal 'cloud' ⇒ néalta 'clouds' or 'of clouds'  
braon 'drop' ⇒ braonta 'drops' or 'of drops'

d) Adding **-te** to a monosyllabic or to a polysyllabic that has lost its final syllable:

smaoineamh 'a thought' ⇒ smaointe 'thoughts' or 'of thoughts'

e) Changing the final **-adh/-eadh** or **-ach/-each** of polysyllables to **-aí/-í**:

samhradh 'summer' ⇒ samhraí 'summers' or 'of summers'  
deireadh 'end' ⇒ deirí 'ends' or 'of ends'  
orlach 'inch' ⇒ orlaí 'inches' or 'of inches'  
soitheach 'a vessel' ⇒ soithí 'vessels' or 'of vessels'

f) Performing syncope on polysyllables, slenderizing the final consonant, then adding **-e**:

doras 'a door' ⇒ doirse 'doors' or 'of doors'  
éigeas 'scholar' ⇒ éigse 'scholars' or 'of scholars'

For an explanation of lenition and eclipsis in the following charts, see **Nouns: Mutations**.

For the use of the Definite Article in the following charts, see **Nouns: The Definite Article**.

### EXAMPLE OF NOUN WITH INITIAL CONSONANT:

bord 'table'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	bord	boird	an bord	na boird
G	boird	bord	an bhoird	na mbord
D	ar bhord	ar bhoird	ar an mbord	ar na boird

### EXAMPLE OF NOUN WITH INITIAL VOWEL:

iasc 'fish'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	iasc	éisc	an t-iasc	na héisc
G	éisc	iasc	an éisc	na n-iasc
D	ar iasc	ar éisc	ar an iasc	ar na héisc
V	a éisc	a iasca		

### EXAMPLE OF NOUN WITH FINAL -ACH:

corrach 'marsh'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	corrach	corraigh	an corrach	na corraigh
G	corraigh	corrach	an chorraigh	na gcorrach
D	ar chorrach	ar chorraigh	ar an gcorrach	ar na corraigh

### EXAMPLE OF NOUN WITH N/A PLURAL IN 'A':

cuas 'a hollow'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	cuas	cuasa	an cuas	na cuasa
G	cuais	cuas	an chuais	na gcuas
D	ó chuas	ó chuasa	ón gcuas	ó na cuasa

### EXAMPLE OF NOUN WITH INITIAL 'S':

saothar 'labor'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	saothar	saothair	an saothar	na saothair
G	saothair	saothar	an tsaothair	na saothar
D	ar shaothar	ar shaothair	ar an saothar	ar na saothair

### COMMON FIRST-DECLENSION NOUNS WITH WEAK PLURALS:

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	N/A Pl.	Gn. Pl.
páipéar 'paper'	páipéir	páipéir	páipéar
peann 'pen'	pinn	pinn	peann
focal 'word'	focail	focail	focal
cleas 'trick'	clis	cleasa	cleas



### COMMON FIRST-DECLENSION NOUNS WITH STRONG PLURALS:

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	Plural
tobar 'a well'	tobair	toibreacha
toradh 'fruit'	toraidh	torthaí
aonach 'fair'	aoaigh	aontaí
smaoineamh 'thought'	smaoinimh	smaointe
ollamh 'professor'	ollaimh	ollúna
talamh 'land' <sup>35</sup>	talaimh	tailte

## Nouns: Second Declension

### Characteristics

**Feminine** (except *im* and *sliabh*)

**N/A Singular has a broad or slender final consonant**

**Genitive Singular has final 'e'**

**Vocative Plural has final 'a' or 'e'**

**Vocative Singular and Plural and N/A Singular and Plural are the same**

### FORMATION OF THE GENITIVE SINGULAR

1) If the final consonant is slender, add 'e':

scoil 'a school' ⇒ scoile 'of a school'  
pingin 'a penny' ⇒ pingine 'of a penny'

2) If the final consonant is broad, insert 'i' then add 'e':

bróg 'a shoe' ⇒ bróige 'of a shoe'  
fuinneog 'window' ⇒ fuinneoige 'of a window'

3) Change the internal vowel/s, then add 'e':

ia ⇒ éi	pian 'pain' ⇒ péine 'of pain'
éa ⇒ éi	pléasc 'explosion' ⇒ pléisce 'of an explosion'
ea ⇒ ei	fead 'whistle' ⇒ feide 'of a whistle' (in <b>monosyllabics</b> )
ea ⇒ i	doineann 'storm' ⇒ doininne 'of a storm' (in <b>polysyllabics</b> )
io ⇒ i	spríoc 'target' ⇒ spríce 'of a target'
íó ⇒ í	críoch 'a limit' ⇒ críche 'of a limit'

4) Change the final **-ach/-each** of polysyllabics to **-aí/-í**:

**-ach** ⇒ **-aí**      scornach 'throat' ⇒ scornáí 'of a throat'  
**-each** ⇒ **-í**      cailleach 'hag' ⇒ caillí 'of a hag'

### Weak Plurals

**N/A Plural is formed by adding 'a'.**

**Genitive Plural and N/A Singular are the same.**

When the noun is preceded by the definite article, observe whether the definite article is singular or plural, and whether it causes **lenition (N/A singular), eclipsis (genitive plural)**, or has **no effect (genitive singular or N/A plural)**.

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	N/A Pl.	Gen. Pl.
cláirseach 'harp'	cláirsí 'of a harp'	cláirseacha 'harps'	cláirseach 'of harps'
an chláirseach 'the harp'	na cláirsí 'of the harp'	na cláirseacha 'the harps'	na gcláirseach 'of the harps'

**Second-Declension Nouns that end in -ach, -each, -óg, -eog, -lann, and some other consonants form the N/A plural by adding final 'a':**

N/A Sg.	N/A Pl.
leabharlann 'library'	leabharlanna 'libraries'
tinteog 'stove'	tinteoga 'stoves'
long 'ship'	longa 'ships'
adharc 'horn'	adharca 'horns'
dealbh 'statue'	dealbha 'statues'
tuath 'people'	tuatha 'peoples'
dealg 'thorn'	dealga 'thorns'
cnámh 'bone'	cnámha 'bones'

### Strong Plurals

When the noun is preceded by the definite article, observe whether the definite article **eclipses (genitive plural)** or has **no effect (genitive singular or N/A plural)**. Remember that **the genitive singular of a feminine noun takes na** (e.g. *glór na toinne* 'sound of the wave'; *glór na dtonnra* 'sound of the waves').

### STRONG PLURALS ARE FORMED BY ADDING:

<b>-eanna</b>	aghaidh 'face'	aghaidheanna 'faces' or 'of faces'
<b>-í</b>	bríonglóid 'dream'	bríonglóidí 'dreams' or 'of dreams'
<b>-eacha</b>	gairm 'call [of animal]'	gairmeacha 'call' or 'of calls'
<b>-acha</b>	iníon 'daughter'	iníonacha 'daughters' or 'of daughters'
<b>-ta</b>	tonn 'wave'	tonnta 'waves' or 'of waves'
<b>-te</b>	coill 'forest'	coillte 'forests' or 'of forests'
<b>-tha</b>	gáire 'a shout'	gártha <sup>36</sup> 'shouts' or 'of shouts'
<b>-a</b>	cill 'church'	cealla <sup>37</sup> 'churches' or 'of churches'

### Formation of the Dative Singular

**Second-Declension Nouns retain a distinctive dative singular, formed by removing the final 'e' from the genitive singular.** In the *Caighdeán* the dative singular is the same as the nominative singular. But the distinctive dative singular is still common in Munster Irish and in petrified forms, and you must be able to recognize it in order to backform to the nominative singular. This form is shown in the following example.

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	Dat. Sg. ( <i>caighdeán</i> )	Dat. Sg. (Munster)
fuinneog 'window'	barr fuinneoige 'top of a window'	ar fhuinneog 'on a window'	ar fhuinneoig 'on a window'
an fhuinneog 'the window'	barr na fuinneoige 'top of the window'	ar an bhfuinneog 'on the window'	ar an bhfuinneoig 'on the window'

For an explanation of lenition and eclipsis in the following charts, see *Nouns: Mutations*.

For the use of the Definite Article in the following charts, see *Nouns: The Definite Article*.

### EXAMPLE WITH SLENDER FINAL CONSONANT:

páirc 'field'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	páirc	páirc <u>eanna</u>	an pháirc	na páirc <u>eanna</u>
G	páirc <u>e</u>	páirc <u>eanna</u>	na páirc <u>e</u>	na bpáirc <u>eanna</u>
D	ar pháirc	ar pháirc <u>eanna</u>	ar an bpáirc	ar na páirc <u>eanna</u>
V	a pháirc	a pháirc <u>eanna</u>		

### EXAMPLE WITH FINAL -ÓG:

bumbóg 'bumblebee'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	bumbóg	bumbóga	an bhumbóg	na bumbóga
G	bumbóig <u>e</u>	bumbóg	na bumbóig <u>e</u>	na mbumbóg
D	ar bhumbóg	ar bhumbóga	ar an mbumbóg	ar na bumbóga
V	a bhumbóg	a bhumbóga		

### EXAMPLE WITH INITIAL VOWEL:

ubh 'egg'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	ubh	uibheacha	an ubh	na huibheacha
G	uibh <u>e</u>	uibheacha	na huibh <u>e</u>	na n-uibheacha
D	ar ubh	ar uibheacha	ar an ubh	ar na huibheacha

### EXAMPLE WITH INITIAL 'S':

srón 'nose'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	srón	sróna	an tsrón	na sróna
G	sróin <u>e</u>	srón	na sróin <u>e</u>	na srón
D	ar shrón	ar shróna	ar an tsrón	ar na sróna

## Two Masculine Second-Declension Nouns

*Im* and *sliabh* are masculine, but since they form the genitive singular by adding final 'e', they belong in the Second Declension. To assert their masculinity, they act like First-Declension Nouns when they are preceded by the definite article.

im 'butter'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	im		an t-im	
G	im <u>e</u>		an ime	
D	im		ar an im	

sliabh 'mountain'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	sliabh	sléibh <u>e</u>	an sliabh	na sléibh <u>e</u>
G	sléibh <u>e</u>	sléibh <u>e</u>	an tsléibh <u>e</u>	na sléibh <u>e</u>
D	ar shliabh	ar shléibh <u>e</u>	ar an sliabh	ar na sléibh <u>e</u>
V	a shliabh	a shléibh <u>e</u>		

### COMMON SECOND-DECLENSION NOUNS WITH IRREGULAR GENITIVE PLURALS:

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	N/A Pl.	Gen. Pl.
binn 'peak, tip'	binne 'of a peak'	beanna 'peaks'	beann 'of peaks'
deoir 'tear'	deoire 'of a tear'	deora 'tears'	deor 'of tears'
súil 'eye'	súile 'of an eye'	súile 'eyes'	súl 'of eyes'
glúin 'knee'	glúine 'of a knee'	glúine 'knees'	glún 'of knees'

### COMMON SECOND-DECLENSION NOUNS WITH IRREGULAR STRONG PLURALS:

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	Plural
tír 'country'	tíre 'of a country'	tíortha 'countries' or 'of countries'
fiacail 'tooth'	fiacaille 'of a tooth'	fiac <u>la</u> 'teeth' or 'of teeth'
scian 'knife'	scine 'of a knife'	sceana 'knives' or 'of knives'
deoch 'a drink'	dí 'of a drink'	deoch <u>anna</u> 'drinks' or 'of drinks'
culaith 'suit [of clothes]'	culaithe 'of a suit'	cult <u>acha</u> 'suits' or 'of suits'
obair 'work'	oibre 'of work'	oib <u>reacha</u> 'works' or 'of works'
paidir 'a prayer'	paidre 'of a prayer'	paid <u>reacha</u> 'prayers' or 'of prayers'

# Nouns: Third Declension

## Characteristics

**Masculine or Feminine**

**N/A Singular has a broad or slender final consonant**

**Genitive Singular has final 'a'**

**Vocative Singular and Nominative Singular are the same**

## FORMATION OF THE GENITIVE SINGULAR

1) If the final consonant is broad, add **-a**:

am 'time' ⇒ ama 'of time'  
mallacht 'curse' ⇒ mallachta 'of a curse'

2) Change the internal vowel/s of monosyllabics, then add **-a**:

<b>ei</b> ⇒ <b>ea</b>	greim 'a grip' ⇒ gream <u>a</u> 'of a grip'
<b>io</b> ⇒ <b>ea</b>	lios 'fort' ⇒ leas <u>a</u> 'of a fort'
<b>i</b> ⇒ <b>ea</b>	míl 'honey' ⇒ me <u>al</u> a 'of honey'
<b>ai</b> ⇒ <b>a</b>	flaith 'prince' ⇒ flath <u>a</u> 'of a prince'
<b>oi</b> ⇒ <b>o</b>	troid 'a fight' ⇒ tro <u>d</u> a 'of a fight'
<b>ui</b> ⇒ <b>o</b>	cuid 'a share' ⇒ cod <u>a</u> 'of a share'

3) Perform syncope on polysyllabics with a slender final vowel, then add **-a**:

feadhain 'group [of people]' ⇒ feadhna 'of a group'  
diachair 'distress' ⇒ diachra 'of distress'

4) If the final vowel is slender but syncope is not an option (because the word is monosyllabic, or polysyllabic with a long vowel in the final syllable), broaden and then add **-a**:

feoil 'meat' ⇒ feola 'of meat'  
bádóir 'boatman' ⇒ bádóra 'of a boatman'  
tincéir 'tinker' ⇒ tincéara 'of a tinker'  
barúil 'opinion' ⇒ barúla 'of an opinion'

5) If the noun is feminine with final **-áint**, **-úint**, or **-irt**, change the **-int** to **-n-** or the **-irt** to **-rth-** and then add **-a**:

tiomáint 'driving' ⇒ tiomána 'of driving'  
canúint 'dialect' ⇒ canúna 'of a dialect'  
bagairt 'threat' ⇒ bagartha 'of a threat'

## Weak Plurals

**N/A Singular and Genitive Plural are the same.**

**Genitive Singular and N/A Plural are the same.**

When the noun is preceded by the definite article, observe whether the definite article is singular or plural, and whether it causes **lenition**

(**masculine genitive singular or feminine nominative singular**), **eclipsis** (**masculine or feminine genitive plural**), or has **no effect** (**every other case and number for either gender**).

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	N/A Pl.	Gen. Pl.
treas 'battle'	treas <u>a</u> 'of a battle'	treas <u>a</u> 'battles'	treas 'of battles'
<u>an</u> treas 'the battle'	<u>an</u> treasa 'of the battle'	<u>na</u> treasa 'the battles'	<u>na dtreas</u> 'of the battles'

## Strong Plurals

Nearly all Third-Declension Nouns have Strong Plurals of one of the following types:

1) Monosyllabics with broad final consonants add **-anna** or **-aí**:

bláth 'flower' ⇒ bláthanna 'flowers' or 'of flowers'  
loch 'lake' ⇒ lochanna 'lakes' or 'of lakes'  
rás 'race' ⇒ rásaí 'races' or 'of races'  
rud 'thing' ⇒ rudaí 'things' or 'of things'

2) Monosyllabics with slender final consonants add **-nna** to their genitive singular:

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	Plural
drom 'back'	drom <u>a</u> 'of a back'	dromann <u>a</u> 'backs' or 'of backs'
cith 'shower'	ceath <u>a</u> 'of a shower'	ceathann <u>a</u> 'showers' or 'of showers'

3) For some monosyllabics and polysyllabics **the plural is the same as the genitive singular**, so if the final consonant is slender, perform vowel-change, syncope, or broadening, then add **-a**:

cosaint 'defense' ⇒ cosanta 'defenses' or 'of defenses'  
gamhain 'calf' ⇒ gamhna 'calves' or 'of calves'

4) Agentives<sup>38</sup> that end in **-aeir**, **-éir**, **-eoir**, **-óir**, or **-úir** are masculine and add **-í**:

grósaeir 'grocer' ⇒ grósaeirí 'grocers' or 'of grocers'  
báicéir 'baker' ⇒ báicéirí 'bakers' or 'of bakers'  
feirmeoir 'farmer' ⇒ feirmeoirí 'farmers' or 'of farmers'  
clódóir 'printer' ⇒ clódóirí 'printers' or 'of printers'  
saighdiúir 'soldier' ⇒ saighdiúirí 'soldiers' or 'of soldiers'

5) Feminine nouns with final **-áint**, **-úint**, or **-irt** add **-í**:

taispeáint 'display' ⇒ taispeántí 'displays' or 'of displays'  
cinniúint 'fate' ⇒ cinniúintí 'fates' or 'of fates'  
íobairt 'sacrifice' ⇒ íobairtí 'sacrifices' or 'of sacrifices'

6) Polysyllabics with final **-acht** or **-íocht**<sup>39</sup> are feminine and add **-aí**:

gluaiseacht 'movement' ⇒ gluaiseachtaí 'movements' or 'of movements'

litríocht 'literature' ⇒ litríochtaí 'literatures' or 'of literatures'

scoláireacht ‘scholarship’ ⇒ scoláireachtaí ‘scholarships’ or ‘of scholarships’

7) Polysyllabics with final **-áil**, **-úil**, or **-il** add **-cha** to their genitive singular:

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	Plural
comhdháil ‘a meeting’	comhdhála ‘of a meeting’	comhdhá <u>l</u> acha ‘meetings’ or ‘of meetings’
feadaíl ‘whistling’	feadaíola <sup>40</sup> ‘of whistling’	feadaíol <u>a</u> cha ‘whistlings’ or ‘of whistlings’

For an explanation of lenition and eclipsis in the following charts, see **Nouns: Mutations**.

For the use of the Definite Article in the following charts, see **Nouns: The Definite Article**.

### EXAMPLE OF AGENTIVE:

búistéir ‘butcher’

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	búistéir	búistéirí	an búistéir	na búistéirí
G	búistéara	búistéirí	an bhúistéara	na mbúistéirí
D	do bhúistéir	do bhúistéirí	don bhúistéir	do na búistéirí
V	a bhúistéir	a bhúistéirí		

### EXAMPLE WITH FINAL -ÚIL:

barúil ‘opinion’

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	barúil	barúl <u>a</u> cha	an bharúil	na barúlacha
G	barúla	barúl <u>a</u> cha	na barúla	na mbarúlacha
D	de bharúil	de bharúl <u>a</u> cha	den bharúil	de na barúlacha

### EXAMPLE WITH FINAL -ACHT:

cumhacht ‘power’

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	cumhacht	cumhachtaí	an chumhacht	na cumhachtaí
G	cumhachta	cumhachtaí	na cumhachta	na gcumhachtaí
D	ar chumhacht	ar chumhachtaí	ar an gcumhacht	ar na cumhachtaí

### EXAMPLE WITH INTERNAL-VOWEL CHANGE:

crith ‘shiver’

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	crith	creathanna	an crith	na creathanna
G	creatha	creathanna	an chreatha	na gcreathanna
D	de chrith	de chreathanna	den chrith	de na creathanna

### EXAMPLE WITH INITIAL VOWEL:

onóir ‘honor’

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	onóir	onór <u>a</u> cha	an onóir	na honóracha
G	onóra	onór <u>a</u> cha	na honóra	na n-onóracha
D	le honóir	le honór <u>a</u> cha	leis an onóir	leis na honóracha
V	a onóir	a onór <u>a</u> cha		

### EXAMPLE WITH INITIAL ‘S’:

seal ‘while’

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	seal	seal <u>a</u> na	an seal	na sealanna
G	seala	seal <u>a</u> na	an tseala	na sealanna
D	de sheal	de sheal <u>a</u> na	den seal	de na sealanna

## Common Third-Declension Nouns with Irregular Strong Plurals:

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	Plural
gleann ‘valley’	gleanna	gleannta
feoil ‘meat’	feola	feolta
móin ‘turf’	móna	móinte
cluain ‘deception’	cluana	cluainte
conradh ‘contract’	conartha	conarthaí

## Nouns: Fourth Declension

### Characteristics

#### Masculine or Feminine

includes all masculine nouns with final **-ín** in the N/A Singular

includes most nouns that have a final vowel in the N/A Singular

all Singular Cases are the same

#### FORMATION OF THE GENITIVE SINGULAR

Example of a Fourth-Declension Noun in All Singular Cases:

Ar aithris an <u>file</u> a dhán nua? ‘Did the <u>poet</u> recite his new poem?’	Nominative Case
Tabhair an <u>file</u> in éineacht libh. ‘Bring the <u>poet</u> along with you.’	Accusative Case
Inis dúinn ainm <u>an fhile</u> . ‘Tell us <u>the poet’s</u> name.’	Genitive Case

Nach gcuirfear muid in aithne don fhile? Dative Case  
 'Won't we be introduced to the poet?'

A fhile, tá tú go hiontach! Vocative Case  
 'Poet, you are wonderful!'

## Weak Plurals

**N/A Singular and Genitive Plural are the same.**

When the noun is preceded by the definite article, observe whether the definite article is singular or plural and whether it causes **lenition** (masculine genitive singular or feminine nominative singular), **eclipsis** (masculine or feminine genitive plural), or has **no effect** (every other case and number for either gender).

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	N/A Pl.	Gen. Pl.
bó 'cow'	bó 'of a cow'	ba 'cows'	bó 'of cows'
<u>an bhó</u> 'the cow'	<u>na bó</u> 'of the cow'	<u>na ba</u> 'the cows'	<u>na mbó</u> 'of the cows'

## Strong Plurals

**NEARLY ALL FOURTH-DECLENSION NOUNS HAVE STRONG PLURALS, FORMED IN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS:**

1) Monosyllabics with a final broad vowel add **-nna**:

fleá 'feast' ⇒ fleáanna 'feasts' or 'of feasts'  
 bia 'food' ⇒ biáanna 'foods' or 'of foods'  
 rogha 'choice' ⇒ rogháanna 'choices' or 'of choices'

2) Monosyllabics with a final broad consonant or a final slender vowel add **-anna**:

seans 'chance' ⇒ seansanna 'chances' or 'of chances'  
 ré 'moon' ⇒ réanna 'moons' or 'of moons'

3) Monosyllabics and polysyllabics with final **-í**, **-aí**, or **-aoi** add **-the**; those with final **-é** add **-ithe**:

croí 'heart' ⇒ croíthe<sup>41</sup> 'hearts' or 'of hearts'  
 garraí 'garden' ⇒ garraíthe<sup>42</sup> 'gardens' or 'of gardens'  
 saoi 'wise person' ⇒ saoithe 'wise people' or 'of wise people'  
 bé 'woman' ⇒ béithe 'women' or 'of women'

4) Polysyllabics with final **-a** or final **-ín** add **-í**:

balla 'wall' ⇒ ballaí 'walls' or 'of walls'  
 cailín 'girl' ⇒ cailíní 'girls' or 'of girls'

5) Polysyllabics with final **-le** or **-ne** replace the final **'e'** with **-te**:

tine 'fire' ⇒ tinte 'fires' or 'of fires'  
 féile 'festival' ⇒ féilte 'festivals' or 'of festivals'

6) Agentives<sup>43</sup> with final **-ire**, nouns with final **-áiste**, feminine abstract nouns with final **-e**,<sup>44</sup> and various other polysyllabics with final **-e** replace the final **'e'** with **-í**:

cócaire 'cook' ⇒ cócairí 'cooks' or 'of cooks'  
 coláiste 'college' ⇒ coláistí 'colleges' or 'of colleges'  
 laige 'weakness' ⇒ laigí 'weaknesses' or 'of weaknesses'  
 béile 'meal' ⇒ béilí 'meals' or 'of meals'

**For an explanation of lenition and eclipsis in the following charts, see *Nouns: Mutations*.**

**For the use of the Definite Article in the following charts, see *Nouns: The Definite Article*.**

**EXAMPLE WITH INITIAL VOWEL:**

oráiste 'orange'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	oráiste	oráist <u>í</u>	<u>an t</u> -oráiste	<u>na</u> horáist <u>í</u>
G	oráiste	oráist <u>í</u>	<u>an</u> oráiste	<u>na</u> n-oráist <u>í</u>
D	le horáiste	le horáist <u>í</u>	leis <u>an</u> oráiste	leis <u>na</u> horáist <u>í</u>
V	a oráiste	a oráist <u>í</u>		

**EXAMPLE WITH INITIAL 'S':**

slí 'way'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	slí	slite	<u>an</u> tslí	<u>na</u> slite
G	slí	slite	<u>na</u> slí	<u>na</u> slite
D	slí	slite	ar <u>an</u> tslí	ar <u>na</u> slite

**COMMON FOURTH-DECLENSION NOUNS WITH IRREGULAR STRONG PLURALS:**

Singular	Plural
ainm 'name' or 'of a name'	ainm <u>neacha</u> 'names' or 'of names'
teanga 'tongue' or 'of a tongue'	teang <u>acha</u> 'tongues' or 'of tongues'
duine 'person' or 'of a person'	daoine 'people' or 'of people'
tráthnóna 'evening' or 'of an evening'	tráthnón <u>ta</u> 'evenings' or 'of evenings'
oíche 'night' or 'of a night'	oíche <u>anta</u> 'nights' or 'of nights'



# Nouns: Fifth Declension

## Characteristics

**Feminine** (except nouns denoting professions or their practitioners)

**N/A Singular has a slender final consonant or final vowel**

**Genitive Singular has a broad final consonant**

**Vocative Singular and Nominative Singular are the same**

### FORMATION OF THE GENITIVE SINGULAR

1) Nouns with a final vowel add **-d** or **-n**:

cara 'friend' ⇒ carad 'of a friend'  
ceathrú 'quarter' ⇒ ceathrún 'of a quarter'

2) Monosyllabics and polysyllabics with final **-il**, **-in**, or **-ir** add **-each** or **-ach**. Monosyllabics may lose the final 'i' before adding the genitive singular ending. Polysyllabics whose final syllable contains no long vowel undergo syncope before adding the genitive singular ending:

láir 'mare' ⇒ lárach 'of a mare'  
riail 'rule' ⇒ rialach 'of a rule'  
traein 'train' ⇒ traenach 'of a train'  
coróin 'crown' ⇒ corónach 'of a crown'  
litir 'letter' ⇒ litreach 'of a letter'  
cathair 'city' ⇒ cathrach 'of a city'

3) Polysyllabics with a slender final consonant simply broaden the final consonant:

máthair 'mother' ⇒ máthar 'of a mother'  
abhainn 'river' ⇒ abhann 'of a river'

## Weak Plurals

### GENITIVE SINGULAR AND GENITIVE PLURAL ARE THE SAME.

This is as weird as it gets: to form the N/A Plural, take the genitive singular and slenderize it as if it were the N/A singular of a First-Declension Noun. To distinguish the genitive singular from the genitive plural, remember that the **genitive plural takes the definite article na**<sup>E</sup>.

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	N/A Pl.	Gen. Pl.
caora 'sheep'	caorach 'of a sheep'	caoirigh 'sheep'	caorach 'of sheep'
an chaora 'the sheep'	na caorach 'of the sheep'	na caoirigh 'the sheep'	na gcaorach 'of the sheep'
faocha 'periwinkle'	faochan 'of a periwinkle'	faochain 'periwinkles'	faochan 'of periwinkles'
an fhaocha 'the periwinkle'	na faochan 'of the periwinkle'	na faochain 'the periwinkles'	na bhfaochan 'of the periwinkles'

## Strong Plurals

When the noun is preceded by the definite article, observe whether the definite article **eclipses (genitive plural)** or has **no effect (every other plural case)**. It is best to memorize the forms of a Fifth-Declension Noun as soon as you meet one because some of the commonest are irregular. Many of their less cantankerous brethren form the plural in one of the following ways:

1) Feminine nouns with a final vowel, and some nouns with final **-il**, **-in**, or **-ir** (those with genitive singular in **-ach**) add **-a** to the genitive singular:

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	Plural
pearsa 'person'	pearsan	pearsana
cabhail 'body'	cabhlach	cabhlacha
traein 'train'	traenach	traenacha
cathaoir 'chair'	cathaoireach	cathaoireacha

2) Numbers slenderize the final consonant of the genitive singular (if necessary) and add **-í**:

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	Plural
fiche 'twenty'	fichid	fichidí
tríocha 'thirty'	tríochad	tríochaidí
ochtó 'eighty'	ochtód	ochtóidí

For an explanation of lenition and eclipsis in the following charts, see *Nouns: Mutations*.

For the use of the Definite Article in the following charts, see *Nouns: The Definite Article*.

### EXAMPLE WITH FINAL -IL:

cúil 'corner'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	cúil	cúlacha	an chúil	na cúlacha
G	cúlach	cúlacha	na cúlach	na gcúlacha
D	cúil	cúlacha	sa chúil	sna cúlacha

### EXAMPLE WITH FINAL -IR:

dair 'oak'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	dair	daracha	an dair	na daracha
G	darach	daracha	na darach	na ndaracha
D	as dair	as daracha	as an darach	as na daracha
V	a dhair	a dharacha		

### EXAMPLE WITH INITIAL VOWEL:

#### eochair 'key'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	eochair	eo <u>chr</u> acha	<u>a</u> n eochair	<u>n</u> a <u>h</u> eo <u>chr</u> acha
G	eo <u>ch</u> rach	eo <u>ch</u> acha	<u>n</u> a <u>h</u> eo <u>ch</u> rach	<u>n</u> a <u>n</u> -eo <u>ch</u> acha
D	le heochair	le heo <u>ch</u> acha	leis <u>a</u> n eochair	leis <u>n</u> a <u>h</u> eo <u>ch</u> acha

### EXAMPLE WITH INITIAL 'S':

#### sail 'willow'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	sail	saile <u>ach</u> a	<u>a</u> n <u>t</u> sail	<u>n</u> a saileacha
G	saile <u>ach</u>	saile <u>ach</u> a	<u>n</u> a saileach	<u>n</u> a saileacha
D	de shail	de shaile <u>ach</u> a	de <u>n</u> <u>t</u> sail	de <u>n</u> a saileacha
V	a shail	a shaile <u>ach</u> a		

### COMMON FIFTH-DECLENSION NOUNS:

N/A Sg.	Gen. Sg.	Plural
cara 'friend'	carad	cairde
namhaid 'enemy'	namhad	naimhde
abhainn 'river'	abhann	aibhneacha
athair 'father'	athar	aithreacha
máthair 'mother'	máthar	máithreacha
deartháir 'brother'	dearthár	deartháireacha
uimhir 'number'	uimhreach	uimhreacha
Nollaig 'Christmas'	Nollag	Nollaigí
Éire 'Ireland'	Éireann <sup>45</sup>	
Albain 'Scotland'	Alban	

## Nouns: Irregular

An **Irregular Noun** does not decline according to any common pattern and so does not belong to any Noun Declension. Often one form of an Irregular Noun has an ending suggestive of a specific Noun Declension (e.g. a genitive singular with final **-a**, characteristic of the Third Declension, or a strong plural with final **-acha**, characteristic of the Second and Fifth Declensions), but this semblance of regularity is exploded by plural endings, vowel changes, and/or consonant changes typical of no Noun Declension.

Below are the commonest Irregular Nouns. Since a great many Verbal Nouns are Irregular Nouns, particularly those with final **-adh** or **-eadh**, **-ú** or **-iú** in the N/A singular, examples of these are included as well (see also *Verbal Nouns: Features*).

#### bean 'woman'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	bean	<u>m</u> ná	<u>a</u> n <u>b</u> hean	<u>n</u> a <u>m</u> ná
G	<u>m</u> ná	<u>b</u> an	<u>n</u> a <u>m</u> ná	<u>n</u> a <u>m</u> ban
D	ó bhean	ó <u>m</u> hná	ón <u>m</u> bean	ó <u>n</u> a <u>m</u> ná
V	a bhean	a <u>m</u> hná		

#### deirfiúr<sup>46</sup> 'sister'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	deirfiúr	deirfiú <u>r</u> acha	<u>a</u> n deirfiúr	<u>n</u> a deirfiú <u>r</u> acha
G	deirfé <u>r</u>	deirfiú <u>r</u> acha	<u>n</u> a deirfé <u>r</u>	<u>n</u> a <u>n</u> deirfiú <u>r</u> acha
D	ó dheirfiúr	ó dheirfiú <u>r</u> acha	ón deirfiúr	ó <u>n</u> a deirfiú <u>r</u> acha
V	a dheirfiúr	a dheirfiú <u>r</u> acha		

#### siúr 'sister'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	siúr	siú <u>r</u> acha	<u>a</u> n <u>t</u> siúr	<u>n</u> a siú <u>r</u> acha
G	siú <u>r</u> ach	siú <u>r</u> acha	<u>n</u> a siú <u>r</u> ach	<u>n</u> a siú <u>r</u> acha
D	ó shiúr	ó shiú <u>r</u> acha	ón <u>t</u> siúr	ó <u>n</u> a siú <u>r</u> acha
V	a shiúr	a shiú <u>r</u> acha	—	—

#### lá 'day'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	lá	laeth <u>a</u> nta	<u>a</u> n lá	<u>n</u> a laeth <u>a</u> nta
G	lae	laeth <u>a</u> nta	<u>a</u> n lae	<u>n</u> a laeth <u>a</u> nta
D	ar lá	ar laeth <u>a</u> nta	ar <u>a</u> n lá	ar <u>n</u> a laeth <u>a</u> nta

#### mí 'month'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	mí	mí <u>o</u> nn <u>a</u>	<u>a</u> n <u>m</u> hí	<u>n</u> a mí <u>o</u> nn <u>a</u>
G	mí <u>o</u> sa	mí <u>o</u> nn <u>a</u>	<u>n</u> a mí <u>o</u> sa	<u>n</u> a mí <u>o</u> nn <u>a</u>
D	de mhí	de mhí <u>o</u> nn <u>a</u>	de <u>n</u> <u>m</u> hí	de <u>n</u> a mí <u>o</u> nn <u>a</u>

#### talamh ♂ 'land' (when treated as a First Declension Noun)

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	talamh	tailte	<u>a</u> n talamh	<u>n</u> a tailte
G	tal <u>a</u> imh	tailte	<u>a</u> n tal <u>a</u> imh	<u>n</u> a <u>d</u> tailte
D	ar thalamh	ar thailte	ar <u>a</u> n talamh	ar <u>n</u> a tailte

#### talamh ♀ 'land' (when treated as a Fifth-Declension Noun)

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	talamh	tailte	<u>a</u> n talamh	<u>n</u> a tailte
G	tal <u>ú</u> n	tailte	<u>n</u> a tal <u>ú</u> n	<u>n</u> a <u>d</u> tailte
D	ar thalamh	ar thailte	ar <u>a</u> n talamh	ar <u>n</u> a tailte

dia 'god'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	dia	déithe	an dia	na déithe
G	dé	déithe	an dé	na ndéithe
D	ó dhia	ó dhéithe	ón dia	ó na déithe
V	a dhia	a dhéithe		

teach 'house'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	teach	tithe	an teach	na tithe
G	tí	tithe	an tí	na dtithe
D	ar theach	ar thithe	ar an teach	ar na tithe

leaba ♀ 'bed'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	leaba	leapacha	an leaba	na leapacha
G	leapa	leapacha	na leapa	na leapacha
D	i leaba	i leapacha	sa leaba	sna leapacha

olann ♀ 'wool'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	olann	olanna	an olann	na holanna
G	olla	olann	na holla	na n-olann
D	le holann	le holanna	leis an olann	leis na holanna

moladh, Verbal Noun of *mol* 'praise'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	moladh	moltaí	an moladh	na moltaí
G	molta	moltaí	an mholta	na moltaí
D	ó mholadh	ó mholtaí	ón moladh	ó na moltaí

cailleadh, Verbal Noun of *cail* 'lose'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	cailleadh		an cailleadh	
G	caillte		an chailte	
D	ó chailleadh		ón gcaillleadh	

dó, Verbal Noun of *dóigh* 'burn'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	dó	dónna	an dó	na dónna
G	dóite	dónna	an dóite	na ndónna
D	de dhó	de dhónna	den dó	de na dónna

bailiú, Verbal Noun of *bailigh* 'gather'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	bailiú		an bailiú	
G	bailithe		an bhailithe	
D	le bailiú		leis an mbailiú	

## Nouns: Mutations

Nouns undergo mutation more often than any other kind of word. To present a truly exhaustive list of these circumstances would require extensive annotation, and cause most learners to self-destruct in frustration. Apart from the tidal wave of information, some 'rules' have so many exceptions that they are worthier of the name 'tendencies'. The list below lacks a very few 'tendencies' that I have judged potentially lethal to enthusiasm.<sup>47</sup> All of the commonest circumstances for lenition and eclipsis have been included.

### The following rules apply to nouns of all declensions.

#### KEY TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

'any noun' = an indefinite noun of either gender or number, or a proper noun

'a noun alone' = a noun without any attributive adjectives or other qualifiers such as the definite article, e.g. *freagra* 'answer' is a noun alone, whereas *an freagra* 'the answer', *freagra ceart* 'a correct answer' or *freagra ar bith* 'any answer' are not.

**E1** = Exception 1: This rule does not apply to nouns with initial 'd', 't', or 's'.

**E1a** = Exception 1a: This rule does not apply to nouns with initial 'd', 't', 's', or 'f'.

**E2** = Exception 2: This rule does not apply when the first word has final 'd', 'n', 't', 'l', or 's' and the second word has initial 'd', 't', or 's'.

**E3** = Exception 3: A singular noun with initial 's' acquires a prefix 't' instead of being lenited.

All other exceptions are given in footnotes.

### Lenition

1) Any noun after the vocative particle *a*:

*A Dháibhí, cén chaoi a bhfuil tú?*  
'Dáibhí, how are you?'

*A bhuachaillí, cá bhfuil bhur n-athair?*  
'Boys, where is your father?'

2) Any noun that is the second element in a compound word (E2):

dea-mhéin 'goodwill'  
míochomhairle 'bad advice'  
drochbhéal 'foul language'  
seanduine 'old person' (E2)

3) A definite singular feminine noun in any case *except* the genitive (E1, E3):

Cén tsiocair a bhí lena bhás? (E3) Nominative Case  
'What was the reason for his death?'

An dtuigeann siad an deacracht? (E1) Accusative Case  
'Do they understand the difficulty?'

Bhuail Roibeard isteach sa chistin. Dative Case  
'Roibeard went into the kitchen.'

A Cháit, ná himigh! Vocative Case  
'Cáit, don't go!'

4) A definite singular masculine noun in the genitive case (E1, E3):

deireadh an bhóthair 'the end of the road'  
cosa an chú 'the hound's legs'  
ainm an duine seo 'this person's name' (E1)  
barr an tsléibhe 'the top of the mountain' (E3)

5) Any definite or proper noun in the genitive case that is *neither* the subject *nor* the object of a following verbal noun (see *The Verbal Noun: Functions*):

iníon Bharra 'Barra's daughter'  
Oíche Shamhna 'Halloween night'  
coireanna mhac an chait 'crimes of the cat's son'

6) Any singular noun after *sa/san* 'in the', *den* 'from/off the', or *don* 'to/for the' (E1, E3):

don ghlantóir 'for the cleaner'  
sa tor 'in the bush' (E1)  
den tsiléáil 'off the ceiling' (E3)  
don teach 'for the house' (E1)

7) Any indefinite singular noun after the simple prepositions *ar* 'on',<sup>48</sup> *faoi* 'under', *ó* 'from', *de* 'from', *do* 'to, for', *roimh* 'before', *trí* 'through', *mar* 'as', *um* 'around', and any verbal noun after *a* 'to':<sup>49</sup>

ar pháipéar 'on paper'  
faoi uisce 'under water'  
ó tharraiceán 'from a drawer'  
de ghlanmheabhair 'from memory'  
do dhuine 'for a person'  
roimh fhuinneog 'before a window'  
trí cheo 'through fog'  
mar thine 'like fire'  
um Shamhain 'around Halloween'

a theacht 'to come'

8) Any noun after *idir* 'both':<sup>50</sup>

idir mhná agus fhir 'both women and men'  
idir mhúinteoirí agus mhic léinn 'both teachers and students'

9) Any definite, proper, or otherwise specific noun after *thar* 'past':<sup>51</sup>

thar chríoch an fhearainn 'past the edge of the field'  
thar Ghaillimh 'past Galway'  
thar dhuine ar an gcoirnéal 'past a person on the corner'  
thar bheirt acu 'past two of them'

10) Any indefinite noun alone after *gan* 'without' (E1a<sup>52</sup> and proper nouns):

gan chúis 'without cause'  
gan teip 'without fail' (E1a)  
gan fonn 'without desire' (E1a)

11) A definite or proper noun in the genitive case after any compound preposition:

in éadan fhoireann an bhaile eile 'against the other town's team'  
i láthair a mhic 'in his son's presence'  
de réir Phádraigín 'according to Pádraigín'

12) Any noun after *mo* 'my', *do* 'your', or *a* 'his':

mo pheann 'my pen'  
do phost 'your job'  
d'oifig<sup>53</sup> 'your office'  
a chior 'his comb'

13) Any noun after *uile* 'all, every':

gach uile fhocal 'every word'  
an uile phaidir 'every prayer'

14) Any noun after *aon* 'one, any' or *chéad* 'first' (E1):

aon chaoi 'any opportunity'  
an chéad cheist 'the first question'  
aon duine 'anyone' (E1)  
an chéad fhear 'the first man'

15) Any *singular* noun after *dhá* 'two',<sup>54</sup> *trí* 'three', *ceithre* 'four', *cúig* 'five', or *sé* 'six'. In addition, when *a*<sup>h</sup> 'her', *ár*<sup>E</sup> 'our', *bhur*<sup>E</sup> 'your', or *a*<sup>E</sup> 'their' precedes *dhá*, the noun after *dhá* undergoes the mutation normally caused by the possessive adjective *instead of* the lenition normally caused by *dhá*, e.g. *a dhá cois* 'her two feet'. *trí* 'three', *ceithre* 'four', *cúig* 'five', or *sé* 'six':

dhá cheann<sup>55</sup> 'two [of them]'  
trí charn 'three heaps'  
ceithre fhocal 'four words'  
cúig mhíle 'five miles'  
sé dhath 'six colors'

16) Any noun after *beirt* ‘two people’:

beirt bhan ‘two women’  
beirt cheoltóirí ‘two musicians’

17) Any noun after a past or conditional form of the copula, *ba/ab*, *níor/níorbh*, *ar/arbh*, *nár/nárbh*, *gur/gurbh* (see *The Copula: Forms*):

Ar chat a bhí ann?  
‘Was it a cat that was there?’

Níorbh fhéidir leis bheith ann in am.  
‘He couldn’t be there in time.’

Ar ghluaisteán a mharaigh é?  
‘Was it a car that killed it?’

Tá Jennifer agus M. K. cinnte nár ghadhar a mharaigh é.  
‘Jennifer and M. K. are certain it wasn’t a dog that killed it.’

Creidtear gurbh fhear i ngluaisteán a mharaigh é.  
‘It’s believed that it was a man in a car that killed it.’

19) A proper noun after the surname elements *Mhic*, *Ní/Nic*, and *Uí*:

leanbh Chiaráin Mhic Mhathúna ‘Ciarán Mac Mathúna’s child’  
seoladh Mháire Nic Phiarais ‘Máire Nic Phiarais’s address’  
oifig Bhriain Uí Chonchubhair ‘Brian Ó Conchubhair’s office’

Note: *Dé* ‘God; day’, *San* ‘Saint’, and *Déardaoin* ‘Thursday’ are exempt from lenition under *any* circumstances. Nouns are *not* lenited after *Dé* ‘Day’, *Féile* ‘Festival, Feast-Day’, *Naomh* ‘Saint’, *San* ‘Saint’, or *chun* ‘toward’:

ar son Dé ‘for God’s sake’  
Dé Máirt ‘Tuesday’  
Lá Fhéile Pádraig ‘Saint Patrick’s Day’  
tobar Naomh Brid ‘Saint Bridget’s Well’  
ospidéal San Séamas ‘Saint James’ Hospital’  
chun fothana ‘toward shelter’

## Eclipsis

1) Any noun after the Possessive Adjectives *ár* ‘our’, *bhur* ‘your’, and *a* ‘their’:

ár gcairde ‘our friends’  
bhur dtuismitheoirí ‘your parents’  
a ngluaisteán ‘their car’

2) Any singular noun after the Cardinal Numbers *seacht* ‘seven’, *ocht* ‘eight’, *naoi* ‘nine’, and *deich* ‘ten’:

seacht gcinn<sup>56</sup> ‘seven [of them]’  
ocht mbliana ‘eight years’  
naoi gcéad ‘nine hundred’  
deich bpunt ‘ten pounds’

3) Any definite noun in the genitive plural:

dathanna na ngaoth ‘the colors of the winds’

ainmneacha na dturtar ‘the turtles’ names’

4) Any noun after the Simple Prepositions *i* ‘in’, *go* ‘up to’, and in certain idioms, *ar* ‘on’:

i ndáiríre ‘in earnest’  
go bhfios dúinn ‘to the best of our knowledge’  
ar ndóigh ‘of course’

5) Any definite singular noun<sup>57</sup> after the Simple Prepositions *ag* ‘at’, *ar* ‘on’, *as* ‘out of’, *faoi* ‘under’, *le* ‘with’, *ó* ‘from’, *roimh* ‘before’, *trí* ‘through’, *chuig* ‘toward’, *thar* ‘past’, *um* ‘around’, or *dar* ‘by’:<sup>58</sup>

ag an oifig ‘at the office’  
ar an bpláta ‘on the plate’  
as an mbuidéal ‘out of the bottle’  
faoin mbord ‘under the table’  
leis an ngaoth ‘with the wind’  
ón bhfeirm ‘from the farm’  
roimh an doras ‘before the door’  
tríd an sruth ‘through the stream’  
chuig an tír ‘toward the land’  
thar an abhainn ‘across the river’  
um an lios ‘around the ringfort’  
dar an gCruthaitheoir! ‘by the Maker!’



## Part 3

# Adjectives

## Predicative vs. Attributive

There are two grammatically different types of adjective, the Predicate Adjective and the Attributive Adjective.

A **Predicate Adjective** requires a verb to connect it to a noun.

### EXAMPLES OF THE PREDICATE ADJECTIVE WITH VERB:

The moon was bright.  
It looked orange that night.  
We felt lucky to see it.

An **Attributive Adjective** is directly connected to a noun and is said to 'qualify' it.

### EXAMPLES OF THE ATTRIBUTIVE ADJECTIVE QUALIFYING A NOUN:

The bright moon rose soon after sunset.  
Its orange hue made it resemble a pumpkin.  
Lucky onlookers admired it.

The distinction between a Predicate Adjective and an Attributive Adjective is crucial. A **Predicate Adjective does not inflect to match the gender or number of a noun** because the two words are different grammatical units with different grammatical roles: the noun is the subject and the adjective is the predicate.

### EXAMPLES OF THE PREDICATE ADJECTIVE AND VERB:

D'éirigh na húlla <u>milis</u> .	subject is a plural masculine noun
'The apples <u>became sweet</u> .'	<i>na húlla</i> 'the apples'
Tá an bhróg <u>cúng</u> .	subject is a singular feminine noun
'The shoe <u>is narrow</u> .'	<i>an bhróg</i> 'the shoe'
Fásfaidh na fiailí agus an féar <u>ard</u> .	subjects are a plural feminine noun <i>na fiailí</i> 'the weeds' and a singular
'The weeds and the grass <u>will grow high</u> .'	masculine noun <i>an féar</i> 'the grass'

An **Attributive Adjective must inflect to match the gender, number, and case of the noun it qualifies** because the two words constitute a single grammatical unit with a single grammatical function: the adjective provides details about the noun in its capacity of subject, direct object, indirect object, etc.

### EXAMPLES OF THE ATTRIBUTIVE ADJECTIVE WITH NOUN:

D'ith siad <u>na húlla milse</u> .	noun is masculine, accusative plural
'They ate <u>the sweet apples</u> .'	<i>na húlla</i> 'the apples'
Cuirfidh sí síol <u>an úill mhilis</u> .	noun is masculine, genitive singular
'She will plant the seed <u>of the sweet apple</u> .'	<i>an úill</i> 'of the apple'
Tabhair dom <u>an eochair mhór</u> .	noun is feminine, accusative singular
'Give me <u>the large key</u> .'	<i>an eochair</i> 'the key'
Thit <u>an chiaróg dhubh</u> den <u>chloch bheag</u> .	nouns are feminine, nominative singular
' <u>The black beetle</u> fell off <u>the small stone</u> .'	<i>an chiaróg</i> 'the beetle' and dative singular <i>den chloch</i> 'off the stone'

A **Predicate Adjective and an Attributive Adjective can qualify the same noun.**

### EXAMPLES OF ATTRIBUTIVE ADJECTIVES AND PREDICATE ADJECTIVES:

An dóigh leat go bhfuil an cat dubh cairdiúil?  
'Do you think that the black cat is friendly?'

A chailín bhig a bhí cliste nuair a d'ionsaigh an mac tíre mór ocrach an teach!  
'O little girl who was clever when the big, hungry wolf attacked the house!'

Thit báisteach throm anuas as na néalta dorcha a bhí íseal agus gruagach sna spéartha.  
'Heavy rain fell down out of the dark clouds that were low and hairy in the skies.'

## Adjectives: Degrees

Adjectives come in four degrees: Positive, Equative, Comparative, and Superlative.

**I. In English, the adjective has the same form in the Positive and Equative Degrees, and different forms in the Comparative and Superlative Degrees.**

The **Equative** form is enclosed by 'as . . . as'.

The **Comparative** form has final -er or is preceded by 'more'.

The **Superlative** form has final -est or is preceded by 'most'.

Positive	Equative	Comparative	Superlative
good	as good as	better	best
small	as small as	smaller	smallest
dark	as dark as	darker	darkest
beautiful	as beautiful as	more beautiful	most beautiful

An adjective in the Positive, Comparative, and Superlative Degrees can be used *either* Predicatively or Attributively.

An adjective in the Equative Degree can be used *only* Predicatively.

#### EXAMPLES OF PREDICATIVE ADJECTIVES:

The soup at the new restaurant was <u>good</u> .	Positive
The main course was <u>as good as</u> the soup.	Equative
The bread was <u>better</u> than anyone expected.	Comparative
The dessert was the <u>best</u> we'd ever had.	Superlative

#### EXAMPLES OF ATTRIBUTIVE ADJECTIVES:

The <u>good</u> soup was served with croutons.	Positive
The <u>better</u> bread was San Francisco sourdough.	Comparative
The <u>best</u> dessert was called 'Raspberry Bash'.	Superlative

### II. In Irish, the adjective has the same form in the Positive and Equative Degrees and the same form in the Comparative and Superlative Degrees.

The **Equative** form is enclosed by *chomh . . . le*.

The **Comparative** form is preceded by *níos*.

The **Superlative** form is preceded by *is*.

Positive	Equative	Comparative	Superlative
maith 'good'	chomh maith le 'as good as'	níos fearr 'better'	is fearr 'best'
beag 'small'	chomh beag le 'as small as'	níos lú 'smaller'	is lú 'smallest'
dubh 'dark'	chomh dubh le 'as dark as'	níos duibhe 'darker'	is duibhe 'darkest'
álainn 'beautiful'	chomh hálainn le 'as beautiful as'	níos áille 'more beautiful'	is áille 'most beautiful'

An adjective in the Positive or Comparative Degree may be used *either* Predicatively or Attributively.

An adjective in the Equative Degree may be used *only* Predicatively.

An adjective in the Superlative Degree may be used *only* Attributively.

#### EXAMPLES OF PREDICATIVE ADJECTIVES:

Is dóigh liom go mbeidh an dráma go <u>maith</u> . 'I think that the play will be <u>good</u> .'	Positive
Ní bheidh sé <u>chomh maith leis</u> an gceann eile. 'It won't be <u>as good as</u> the other one.'	Equative
Ach beidh sé <u>níos fearr</u> ná an scannán. 'But it will be <u>better</u> than the film.'	Comparative

#### EXAMPLES OF ATTRIBUTIVE ADJECTIVES:

Ar bhreathnaigh tú ar an dráma <u>maith</u> aréir? 'Did you see the <u>good</u> play last night?'	Positive
Bhreathnaigh mé ar cheann <u>níos fearr</u> ná sin. 'I saw a <u>better</u> one than that.'	Comparative
Ba é an ceann <u>is fearr</u> dár scríobh Joyce Flynn. 'It was the <u>best</u> one of all Joyce Flynn wrote.'	Superlative

## Adjectives: Plurals

Lenition of adjectives is explained in *Adjectives: Mutations*.

All adjectives form their plurals in one of the following ways:

- 1) An adjective with a broad final consonant adds 'a':<sup>1</sup>

Singular	Plural
fáinne daor 'an expensive ring'	fáinní daora 'expensive rings'
leabhar mór 'a big book'	leabhair mhóra 'big books'
seabhac fíochmhar 'a fierce hawk'	seabhaic fhíochmhara 'fierce hawks'
cú ocrach 'a hungry hound'	cúnna ocracha 'hungry hounds'

- 2) An adjective with a slender final consonant *except -úil* adds 'e':<sup>1</sup>

Singular	Plural
gabhar fiáin 'a wild goat'	gabhair fhiáine 'wild goats'
cat ciúin 'a quiet cat'	cait chiúine 'quiet cats'
amhrán binn 'a pleasant song'	amhráin bhinne 'pleasant songs'

- 3) A polysyllabic adjective with final *-úil* trades it for *-úla*:

Singular	Plural
dath maisiúil 'a flattering color'	dathanna maisiúla 'flattering colors'
údar cáiliúil 'a famous author'	údair cháiliúla 'famous authors'
rud páistiúil 'a childish thing'	rudaí páistiúla 'childish things'

- 4) An adjective with a final vowel has the same form in the singular and the plural:<sup>2</sup>

Singular	Plural
áit iargúlta 'a remote place'	áiteanna iargúlta 'remote places'
sionnach cliste 'a clever fox'	sionnaigh chliste 'clever foxes'
sabhaircín buí 'a yellow primrose'	sabhaircíní buí 'yellow primroses'

#### ADJECTIVES THAT UNDERGO SYNCOPE<sup>3</sup>

Positive Degree	Fem. Gen. Sg	Plural
íseal 'low'	ísle	ísle
uasal 'noble'	uaisle	uaisle
álainn 'beautiful'	áille	áille

Positive Degree	Fem. Gen. Sg	Plural
daingean 'secure'	daingne	daingne
domhain 'deep'	doimhne	doimhne
righin 'tough'	righne	righne
aoibhinn 'pleasant'	aoibhne	aoibhne
daibhir '[financially] poor'	daibhre	daibhre
saibhir 'rich'	saibhre	saibhre
doilbhir 'gloomy'	doilbhre	doilbhre
soilbhir 'cheerful'	soilbhre	soilbhre
láidir 'strong'	láidre	láidre
ramhar 'fat'	raimhre	ramhra
dílis 'dear, loyal'	dílse	dílse
milis 'sweet'	milse	milse
folamh 'empty'	foilmhe	folmha
bodhar <sup>4</sup> 'deaf'	bodhaire	bodhra
sleamhain <sup>4</sup> 'smooth, slippery'	sleamhaine	sleamhna

## Strong Plurals and Weak Plurals

If a noun has a Strong Plural, its adjective has a Strong Plural.

Example of an Adjective with a Strong Plural:

**duine fiosrach** 'an inquisitive person'

	Singular	Plural
N/A	duine fiosrach	daoine fiosracha
G	duine fhiosraigh	daoine fiosracha
D	ó dhuine fiosrach	ó dhaoine fiosracha
V	a dhuine fhiosraigh	a dhaoine fiosracha

If a noun has a weak plural, its adjective has a weak plural, and the N/A singular and genitive plural will be the same.

Example of an Adjective with a Weak Plural:

**cat fiosrach** 'a curious cat'

	Singular	Plural
N/A	cat fiosrach	cait fhiosracha
G	cait fhiosraigh	cat fiosrach
D	ó chat fiosrach	ó chait fhiosracha
V	a chait fhiosraigh	a chata fiosracha

## Adjectives: Declensions

An **Adjective Declension** is a group of adjectives that are declined according to the same pattern. **Only Attributive adjectives decline**, so an adjective's declension is irrelevant when the adjective is predicative (see *Adjectives: Predicative vs. Attributive*).

An adjective has just one set of masculine forms and one set of feminine forms, so the declension of the noun it qualifies is irrelevant: an adjective declines the same way for *any* masculine noun and the same way for *any* feminine noun.

Examples of the **Attributive Adjective** with Masculine Nouns:

foirgneamh <b>mór</b> 'a big building'	First-Declension Noun
foirgnimh <b>mhóir</b> 'of a big building'	
sliabh <b>mór</b> 'a large mountain'	Second-Declension Noun
sléibhe <b>mhóir</b> 'of a large mountain'	
áth <b>mór</b> 'a large ford'	Third-Declension Noun
átha <b>mhóir</b> 'of a large ford'	
cóta <b>mór</b> 'a greatcoat'	Fourth-Declension Noun
cóta <b>mhóir</b> 'of a greatcoat'	
cara <b>mór</b> 'a great friend'	Fifth-Declension Noun
carad <b>mhóir</b> 'of a great friend'	

Examples of the **Attributive Adjective** with Feminine Nouns:

drólann <b>mhór</b> 'a large intestine'	Second-Declension Noun
drólainne <b>móire</b> 'of a large intestine'	
ríocht <b>mhór</b> 'a large kingdom'	Third-Declension Noun
ríochta <b>móire</b> 'of a large kingdom'	
aithne <b>mhór</b> 'a great acquaintance'	Fourth-Declension Noun
aithne <b>móire</b> 'of a great acquaintance'	
díle <b>mhór</b> 'a great flood'	Fifth-Declension Noun
díleann <b>móire</b> 'of a great flood'	

In the following charts, each Adjective Declension is described in terms of its Characteristics (i.e. features displayed by every adjective in that declension) and its Inflection in the Singular Cases.

## Adjectives: First Declension

### CHARACTERISTICS

**Masculine N/A Singular** has a broad or slender final consonant (*except -úil* and a few with *-ir*)

Inflection in the Singular Cases

1) When qualifying a **masculine** singular noun, a **First-Declension Adjective** inflects like a **First-Declension Noun**.<sup>5</sup> If the adjective has a slender final consonant, it remains the same in all singular cases. If the adjective has a broad final consonant, the final consonant is attenuated to form the genitive and vocative singular. This may be accomplished by insertion of a final 'i', internal-vowel change,<sup>6</sup> or changing the final **-ach/-each** to **-aigh/-igh** in polysyllabics.

Positive Degree	♂ Genitive and Vocative Singular	Type of Change
cruinn 'round'	cruinn	None
ard 'high'	aird	Attenuation
dearg 'blood-red'	deirg	ea ⇒ ei
liath 'gray'	léith	ia ⇒ éi
geal 'bright'	gil	ea ⇒ i
déanach 'late'	déanaigh	-ach ⇒ -aigh

2) When qualifying a *feminine* singular noun, a **First-Declension Adjective** inflects like a **Second-Declension Noun**. If the adjective has a slender final consonant, it forms the genitive singular by adding final 'e'. If the adjective has a broad final consonant, it forms the genitive singular by attenuating its final consonant or undergoing internal-vowel change,<sup>7</sup> then adding final 'e', or by changing final **-ach/-each** to **-aí/-í**.

Positive Degree	♀ Genitive Singular	Type of Change
cruinn 'round'	cruinne	adds final 'e'
ard 'broad'	airde	attenuation and adds final 'e'
dearg 'blood-red'	deirge	ea ⇒ ei and adds final 'e'
liath 'gray'	léithe	ia ⇒ éi and adds final 'e'
geal 'bright'	gile	ea ⇒ i and adds final 'e'
déanach 'late'	déanaí	-ach ⇒ -aí

For information about the plurals in the following charts, see *Adjectives: Plurals*.

For an explanation of lenition in the following charts, see *Adjectives: Mutations*.

#### EXAMPLE OF AN ADJECTIVE WITH A BROAD FINAL CONSONANT QUALIFYING A MASCULINE NOUN:

capall bán 'a white horse'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	capall bán	capaill bhána	an capall bán	na capaill bhána
G	capaill bháin	capall bán	an chapáill bháin	na gcapall bán
D	ar chapall bán	ar chapáill bhána	ar an gcapall bán	ar na capaill bhána
V	a chapáill bháin	a chapalla bána	—	—

#### EXAMPLE OF AN ADJECTIVE WITH A SLENDER FINAL CONSONANT QUALIFYING A MASCULINE NOUN:

oráiste maith 'a good orange'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	oráiste maith	oráistí maithe	an t-oráiste maith	na horáistí maithe
G	oráiste mhaith	oráistí maithe	an oráiste mhaith	na n-oráistí maithe
D	as oráiste maith	as oráistí maithe	as an oráiste maith	as na horáistí maithe

#### EXAMPLE OF AN ADJECTIVE WITH AN INTERNAL-VOWEL CHANGE QUALIFYING A MASCULINE NOUN:

leabhar beag 'a small book'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	leabhar beag	leabhair bheaga	an leabhar beag	na leabhair bheaga
G	leabhair bhig	leabhar beag	an leabhair bhig	na leabhar beag
D	de leabhar beag	de leabhair bheaga	den leabhar beag	de na leabhair bheaga
V	a leabhair bhig	a leabhara beaga	—	—

#### EXAMPLE OF AN ADJECTIVE WITH A BROAD FINAL CONSONANT QUALIFYING A FEMININE NOUN:

cloch bán 'a white stone'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	cloch bán	clocha bána	an chloch bán	na clocha bána
G	cloiche báine	cloch bán	na cloiche báine	na gcloch bán
D	faoi chloch bán	faoi chlocha bána	faoi gcloch bán	faoi na clocha bána

#### EXAMPLE OF AN ADJECTIVE WITH A SLENDER FINAL CONSONANT QUALIFYING A FEMININE NOUN:

deoch mhaith 'a good drink'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	deoch mhaith	deochanna maithe	an deoch mhaith	na deochanna maithe
G	dí maithe	deochanna maithe	na dí maithe	na ndeochanna maithe
D	i ndeoch mhaith	i ndeochanna maithe	sa deoch mhaith	sna deochanna maithe
V	a dheoch mhaith	a dheochanna maithe	—	—

#### EXAMPLE OF AN ADJECTIVE WITH AN INTERNAL-VOWEL CHANGE QUALIFYING A FEMININE NOUN:

bean bheag 'a small woman'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	bean bheag	mná beaga	an bhean bheag	na mná beaga
G	mná bige	na mban beag	na mná bige	na mban beag
D	le bean bheag	le mná beaga	leis an mbean bheag	leis na mná beaga
V	a bhean bheag	a mhná beaga	—	—

## Adjectives: Second Declension

### CHARACTERISTICS

**Masculine N/A Singular has final -úil**

**a few have final -ir** (*cóir* 'proper', *deacair* 'difficult', *socair* 'easy')

Inflection in the Singular Cases

1) When qualifying a *masculine* singular noun, a **Second-Declension Adjective** has the same form in all singular cases (cf. Fourth-Declension Nouns).

Positive Degree	All Singular Cases
nimhiúil 'poisonous'	nimhiúil
dathúil 'colorful'	dathúil
socair 'easy'	socair

2) When qualifying a *feminine* singular noun, a **Second-Declension Adjective** inflects like a **Third-Declension Noun**. It forms the genitive singular by broadening the final consonant, then adding final **-a**. *Cóir*, *deacair*, and *socair* undergo syncope before adding final **-a**, becoming *córa*, *deacra*, and *socra*.

Positive Degree	Genitive Singular
nimhiúil 'poisonous'	nimhiúla
dathúil 'colorful'	dathúla
socair 'easy'	socra

For information about the plurals in the following charts, see *Adjectives: Plurals*.

For an explanation of lenition in the following charts, see *Adjectives: Mutations*.

### EXAMPLE OF AN ADJECTIVE WITH FINAL -ÚIL QUALIFYING A MASCULINE NOUN:

óstóir flaithiúil 'a generous host'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	óstóir flaithiúil	óstóirí flaithiúla	an t-óstóir flaithiúil	na hóstóirí flaithiúla
G	óstóra fhlaithiúil	óstóirí flaithiúla	an óstóra fhlaithiúil	na n-óstóirí flaithiúla
D	d'óstóir flaithiúil	d'óstóirí flaithiúla	don óstóir flaithiúil	do na hóstóirí flaithiúla
V	a óstóir fhlaithiúil	a óstóirí flaithiúla		

### EXAMPLE OF *deacair* QUALIFYING A MASCULINE NOUN:

cleas deacair 'a difficult trick'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	cleas deacair	cleasa deacra	an cleas deacair	na cleasa deacra
G	clis dheacair	cleas deacair	an chlis dheacair	na gcleas deacair
D	le cleas deacair	le cleasa deacra	leis an gcleas deacair	leis na cleasa deacra
V	a chleas dheacair	a chleasa deacra		

### EXAMPLE OF AN ADJECTIVE WITH FINAL -ÚIL QUALIFYING A FEMININE NOUN:

litir gheanúil 'a loving letter'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	litir gheanúil	litreacha geanúla	an litir gheanúil	na litreacha geanúla
G	litreach geanúla	litreacha geanúla	na litreach geanúla	na litreacha geanúla
D	i litir gheanúil	i litreacha geanúla	sa litir gheanúil	sna litreacha geanúla
V	a litir gheanúil	a litreacha geanúla		

### EXAMPLE OF *deacair* QUALIFYING A FEMININE NOUN:

fadhb dheacair 'a difficult problem'

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	fadhb dheacair	fadhbanna deacra	an fhadhb dheacair	na fadhbanna deacra
G	faidhbe deacra	fadhbanna deacra	na faidhbe deacra	na bhfadhbanna deacra
D	d'fhadhb dheacair	d'fhadhbanna deacra	den fhadhb dheacair	de na fadhbanna deacra
V	a fhadhb dheacair	a fhadhbanna deacra		

## Adjectives: Third Declension

### Characteristics

Masculine N/A Singular has a final vowel

only two of these inflect, and then only for the plural (*breá* 'fine' becomes *breátha* and *te* 'warm' becomes *teo*)

### INFLECTION IN THE SINGULAR CASES

1) When qualifying a *masculine* singular noun, a **Third-Declension Adjective** has the same form in all singular cases (cf. Fourth-Declension Nouns).

**Positive Degree**                      **All Singular Cases**

tanaí 'thin'	tanaí
uaine 'bright green'	uaine
beo 'alive'	beo

2) When qualifying a *feminine* singular noun, a **Third-Declension Adjective** has the same form in all singular cases.

**Positive Degree**                      **All Singular Cases**

tanaí 'thin'	tanaí
uaine 'bright green'	uaine
beo 'alive'	beo

For information about the plurals in the following charts, see *Adjectives: Plurals*.

For an explanation of lenition in the following charts, see *Adjectives: Mutations*.



**EXAMPLE OF AN ADJECTIVE WITH A FINAL VOWEL QUALIFYING A MASCULINE NOUN:**

**néal dorch** ‘a dark cloud’

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	néal dorch	néalta dorch	an néal dorch	na néalta dorch
G	néil dorch	néalta dorch	an néil dorch	na néalta dorch
D	as néal dorch	ar néalta dorch	as an néal dorch	as na néalta dorch

**EXAMPLE OF *breá* QUALIFYING A MASCULINE NOUN:**

**cluiche breá** ‘a fine game’

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	cluiche breá	cluichí breá <u>tha</u>	an cluiche breá	na cluichí breá <u>tha</u>
G	cluiche bhreá	cluichí breá <u>tha</u>	an <u>ch</u> luiche bhreá	na <u>g</u> cluichí breá <u>tha</u>
D	ar chluiche breá	ar chluichí breá <u>tha</u>	ar an <u>g</u> cluiche breá	ar na cluichí breá <u>tha</u>
V	a chluiche bhreá	a chluichí breá <u>tha</u>		

**EXAMPLE OF AN ADJECTIVE WITH A FINAL VOWEL QUALIFYING A FEMININE NOUN:**

**súil dorch** ‘a dark eye’

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	súil dorch	súile dorch	an <u>ts</u> súil dorch	na súile dorch
G	súile dorch	súl dorch	na súile dorch	na súl dorch
D	i súil dorch	i súile dorch	sa <u>ts</u> súil dorch	sna súile dorch
V	a shúil dorch	a shúile dorch		

**EXAMPLE OF *breá* QUALIFYING A FEMININE NOUN:**

**bliain bhreá** ‘a fine year’

	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
N/A	bliain bhreá	blianta breá <u>tha</u>	an <u>bh</u> liain bhreá	na blianta breá <u>tha</u>
G	bliana breá	blianta breá <u>tha</u>	na bliana breá	na <u>m</u> blianta breá <u>tha</u>
D	i mbliain bhreá	i mblianta breá <u>tha</u>	sa <u>bh</u> liain bhreá	sna blianta breá <u>tha</u>
V	a bhliain bhreá	a bhlianta breá <u>tha</u>		

## Adjectives: Mutations

Only *Attributive Adjectives* undergo mutation, and if several of them qualify the same noun, all of them undergo the same mutation.

To avoid memory overload, a few very specific circumstances and a handful of exceptions have been omitted from the list of rules below. All of the commonest circumstances for lenition and eclipsis have been included.

The following rules apply to all adjectives, with one exception: adjectives with initial ‘d’, ‘t’, or ‘s’ are rarely lenited when they qualify a noun with final ‘d’, ‘t’, ‘n’, ‘l’ or ‘s’ (cf. E2 in *Nouns: Mutations*).

### LENITION

- 1) After a noun in the N/A plural or dative plural that has a slender final consonant:

Thug na Ceanadaigh dheasa cupáin mhóra tae do na Meiriceánaigh thuirseacha.

‘The nice Canadians gave big cups of tea to the tired Americans.’

- 2) After a masculine noun in the genitive or vocative singular:

Féach ar sciathán an éin bháin!

‘Look at the wing of the white bird!’

A éin bháin, cad as tú?

‘White bird, where are you from?’

- 3) After a feminine noun in every singular case *except* the genitive:

Nach bróg ghleoite í sin? Nominative Case

‘Isn’t that a pretty shoe?’

Cuir ort an bhróg ghleoite seo. Accusative Case

‘Put on this pretty shoe.’

Cé mhéad atá ar an mbróg ghleoite sin? Dative Case

‘How much is that pretty shoe?’

A bhróg ghleoite, tá tú ródhaoir! Vocative Case

‘Pretty shoe, you are too expensive!’

- 4) After the combination ‘Simple Preposition + *an* + Feminine Noun’<sup>8</sup>:

ar an bhfuinneog ghlan ‘on the clean window’

leis an lámh chlé ‘with the left hand’

- 5) After a singular noun preceded by *dhá*, *trí*, *ceithre*, *cúig*, *sé*, *seacht*, *ocht*, *naoi*, or *deich*:

dhá fhearán bhreaca ‘two turtle doves’

trí chearc Fhrancacha ‘three French hens’

ceithre éan ghleoite ‘four beautiful birds’

cúig fháinne bhuí ‘five yellow rings’

sé ghé dhonna ‘six brown geese’

seacht n-eala mheasúla ‘seven handsome swans’

ocht mbó bhána ‘eight white cows’

naoi muc dhubha ‘nine black pigs’

deich gcaora fhliucha ‘ten wet sheep’

6) After a noun preceded by *beirt* 'two [people]':

beirt bhan ghnóthacha 'two busy women'

7) After a noun lenited by a Simple Preposition<sup>9</sup> or a Compound Preposition:<sup>10</sup>

ar mhaidin bhreá 'on a fine morning'

i ndiaidh an tráthnóna fhada 'after the long evening'

## ECLIPSIS

Adjectives are eclipsed only if they *precede* nouns that would have been eclipsed. Since most adjectives follow their nouns, Cardinal Numbers are pretty much the only Attributive Adjectives that intercept an eclipsis intended for their nouns.

ainmneacha na gceithre eala  
'the names of the four swans'

i gcaitheamh na trí lá a chaith siad sa choill  
'during the three days that they spent in the woods'

# Pronouns

There are six types of pronouns: Interrogative Pronouns,<sup>11</sup> Personal Pronouns, Demonstrative Pronouns, Subject Pronouns, Object Pronouns, and Prepositional Pronouns.<sup>12</sup>

The first three types describe the noun that the pronoun represents:

An **Interrogative Pronoun** specifies sentence (i.e. 'what?' vs. 'who?' or 'whom?').

A **Personal Pronoun** specifies person and number, and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. it can also specify gender.

A **Demonstrative Pronoun** specifies position or distance.

The second three types describe the grammatical role of the pronoun:

A **Subject Pronoun** is in the nominative case and represents the noun that is performing an action.

An **Object Pronoun** is in the accusative (= objective) case and represents the noun that is suffering the action.

A **Prepositional Pronoun** is equivalent to a simple preposition plus a pronoun in the dative case.

Because these types describe different aspects of a pronoun, they are not mutually exclusive. **Interrogative Pronouns, Personal Pronouns, and Demonstrative Pronouns can function as either Subject Pronouns or Object Pronouns.**

Personal Pronouns and Demonstrative Pronouns have both ordinary (i.e. not emphasized) and emphatic (i.e. emphasized) forms.

## I. PERSONAL PRONOUNS AS SUBJECT PRONOUNS

a) After any conjugated verb *except* the Copula, they are:

	Ordinary Singular	Plural	Emphatic Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	mé 'I'	muid/sinn 'we'	1 <sup>st</sup> p. mise 'I'	muidne/sinne 'we'
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	tú 'you'	sibh 'you'	2 <sup>nd</sup> p. tusa 'you'	sibhse 'you'
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	sí 'she' sé 'he'	siad 'they'	3 <sup>rd</sup> p. sise 'she' seisean 'he'	siadsan 'they'

b) After the Copula, *í, é, and iad* are used instead of *sí, sé, and siad*.  
Forms for the other persons and numbers are the same.

## II. PERSONAL PRONOUNS AS OBJECT PRONOUNS

After *any* verb, they are:

Ordinary		Emphatic	
Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p. mé 'me'	muid/sinn 'us'	1 <sup>st</sup> p. mise 'me'	muidne/sinne 'us'
2 <sup>nd</sup> p. tú 'you'	sibh 'you'	2 <sup>nd</sup> p. tusa 'you'	sibhse 'you'
3 <sup>rd</sup> p. í 'her'	iad 'them'	3 <sup>rd</sup> p. ise 'her'	iadsan 'them'
é 'him'		eisean 'him'	

## III. DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

- a) As in English, **these do not inflect for number or gender and are customarily used only in the 3<sup>rd</sup> p.** After *any* verb, they are:

seo 'this'  
sin 'that'  
siúd 'that one there'

- b) **To specify the number and/or gender of 'this', 'that', or 'that one there', qualify a Personal Pronoun with a Demonstrative Adjective.** Demonstrative Adjectives and Demonstrative Pronouns are identical:

Subject Pronouns with Demonstratives	Object Pronouns with Demonstratives
sí seo 'this [female] one'	í seo 'this [female] one'
sí sin 'that [female] one'	í sin 'that [female] one'
sí siúd 'that [female] one there'	í siúd 'that [female] one there'
sé seo 'this [male] one'	é seo 'this [male] one'
sé sin 'that [male] one'	é sin 'that [male] one'
sé siúd 'that [male] one there'	é siúd 'that [male] one there'
siad seo 'these ones'	iad seo 'these ones'
siad sin 'those ones'	iad sin 'those ones'
siad siúd 'those ones there'	iad siúd 'those ones there'

## IV. 'PERSONAL PRONOUN + FÉIN'

When *féin* occurs in this combination it means **-self**.

With a Personal Pronoun as Subject Pronoun

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	mé féin 'I myself'	muid/sinn féin 'we ourselves'
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	tú féin 'you yourself'	sibh féin 'you yourselves'
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	sí féin 'she herself'	siad féin 'they themselves'
	sé féin 'he himself'	

With a Personal Pronoun as Object Pronoun

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	mé féin 'myself'	muid/sinn féin 'ourselves'
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	tú féin 'yourself'	sibh féin 'yourselves'
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	í féin 'herself'	iad féin 'themselves'
	é féin 'himself'	

## V. 'POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE + NOUN+ FÉIN'

When *féin* occurs in this combination it means 'own':

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	m'árasán féin 'my own apartment'	ár n-árasán féin 'our own apartment'
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	d'árasán féin 'your own apartment'	bhur n-árasán féin 'your own apartment'
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	a hárasán féin 'her own apartment'	a n-árasán féin 'their own apartment'
	a árasán féin 'his own apartment'	

## VI. EMPHATIC PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUNS

Prepositional Pronouns take the same set of emphatic suffixes as do the Personal Pronouns (cf. the emphatic forms in Ia. and IIa. above). Where there are two possible endings, the choice depends on whether the Prepositional Pronoun has a broad or a slender final consonant. **A hyphen is inserted when the final letter of a word is the same as the initial letter of an emphatic suffix.**

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	-se/-sa	-ne
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	-se/-sa	-se/-sa
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	-se ♀ -sean/-san ♂	-sean/-san
<b>ag</b> 'at'		
	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	agamsa 'at me'	againne 'at us'
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	agatsa 'at you'	agaibhse 'at you'
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	aicise 'at her'	acusan 'at them'
aigesean 'at him'		
<b>ar</b> 'on'		
	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	ormsa 'on me'	orainne 'on us'
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	ortsa 'on you'	oraibhse 'on you'
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	uirhise 'on her'	orthusan 'on them'
airsean 'on him'		

**as** ‘out of’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	asamsa ‘out of <i>me</i> ’	asainne ‘out of <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	asatsa ‘out of <i>you</i> ’	asaibhse ‘out of <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	aistise ‘out of <i>her</i> ’ as-san ‘out of <i>him</i> ’	asaibhsean ‘out of <i>them</i> ’

**chun** ‘toward’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	chugamsa ‘toward <i>me</i> ’	chugainne ‘toward <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	chugatsa ‘toward <i>you</i> ’	chugaibhse ‘toward <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	chucise ‘toward <i>her</i> ’ chuigesean ‘toward <i>him</i> ’	chucusan ‘toward <i>them</i> ’

**de** ‘off, of, from’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	díomsa ‘off <i>me</i> ’	dínne ‘off <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	díotsa ‘off <i>you</i> ’	díbhse ‘off <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	dise ‘off <i>her</i> ’ desean ‘off <i>him</i> ’	díobhsan ‘off <i>them</i> ’

**do** ‘to, for’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	domsa ‘to <i>me</i> ’	dúinne ‘to <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	duitse ‘to <i>you</i> ’	daoibhse ‘to <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	dise ‘to <i>her</i> ’ dósan ‘to <i>him</i> ’	dóibhsean ‘to <i>them</i> ’

**faoi** ‘under’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	fúmsa ‘under <i>me</i> ’	fúinne ‘under <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	fútsa ‘under <i>you</i> ’	fúibhse ‘under <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	fúithise ‘under <i>her</i> ’ faoisean ‘under <i>him</i> ’	fúthusan ‘under <i>them</i> ’

**i** ‘in’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	ionamsa ‘in <i>me</i> ’	ionainne ‘in <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	ionatsa ‘in <i>you</i> ’	ionaibhse ‘in <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	intise ‘in <i>her</i> ’ annsan/ansin ‘in <i>him</i> ’	iontusan ‘in <i>them</i> ’

**idir** ‘between, among’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	—	eadrainne ‘between <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	—	eadraibhse ‘between <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	—	eatarthusan ‘between <i>them</i> ’

**le** ‘with, by’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	liomsa ‘with <i>me</i> ’	linne ‘with <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	leatsa ‘with <i>you</i> ’	libhse ‘with <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	léise ‘with <i>her</i> ’ leis-sean ‘with <i>him</i> ’	leosan ‘with <i>them</i> ’

**ó** ‘from’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	uaimse ‘from <i>me</i> ’	uainne ‘from <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	uaitse ‘from <i>you</i> ’	uaibhse ‘from <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	uaithise ‘from <i>her</i> ’ uaidhsean ‘from <i>him</i> ’	uathusan ‘from <i>them</i> ’

**roimh** ‘before’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	romhamsa ‘before <i>me</i> ’	romhainne ‘before <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	romhatsa ‘before <i>you</i> ’	romhaibhse ‘before <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	roimpise ‘before <i>her</i> ’ roimhesean ‘before <i>him</i> ’	rompusan ‘before <i>them</i> ’

**thar** ‘across’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	tharamsa ‘from <i>me</i> ’	tharainne ‘from <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	tharatsa ‘from <i>you</i> ’	tharaibhse ‘from <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	thairtise ‘from <i>her</i> ’ thairisean ‘from <i>him</i> ’	tharstusan ‘from <i>them</i> ’

**trí** ‘through’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	tríomsa ‘through <i>me</i> ’	trinne ‘through <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	tríotsa ‘through <i>you</i> ’	tribhse ‘through <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	tríthise ‘through <i>her</i> ’ trídsean ‘through <i>him</i> ’	tríothusan ‘through <i>them</i> ’

**um** ‘around’

	Singular	Plural
1 <sup>st</sup> p.	umamsa ‘around <i>me</i> ’	umainne ‘around <i>us</i> ’
2 <sup>nd</sup> p.	umatsa ‘around <i>you</i> ’	umaibhse ‘around <i>you</i> ’
3 <sup>rd</sup> p.	uimpise ‘around <i>her</i> ’ uimesean ‘around <i>him</i> ’	umpusan ‘around <i>them</i> ’

# Prepositions

## Functions and Types

A **Preposition** indicates a relationship between a noun and another noun, a verb, or an adverb (e.g. position, direction, duration).

The **Object** is the noun that immediately follows the Preposition. The Object may consist of a noun alone (e.g. *as uisce* 'out of water') or of a noun plus any qualifiers (e.g. *as an uisce úr fuar* 'out of the fresh cold water').

**Irish has three types of preposition: Simple Prepositions, Compound Prepositions, and Prepositional Pronouns.**

A **Simple Preposition** consists of one word. Its Object is a noun in the *dative* case, unless it is one of only six that are followed by a noun in the *genitive* case.

A **Compound Preposition** consists of two words, a Simple Preposition and a noun, and its Object is a noun in the *genitive* case.

**Simple Prepositions and Compound Prepositions describe temporal relationships** (e.g. a point in time, how long a condition persisted), **spatial relationships** (e.g. direction, location), and **agentive relationships** (e.g. performer of an action, person responsible for an occurrence).

A **Prepositional Pronoun** (= Conjugated Preposition) is a Simple Preposition with an ending that specifies person and number (e.g. *liom* 'with me', *leo* 'with them'), and also gender in the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. (e.g. *leis* 'with him', *léi* 'with her'). Unlike Simple Prepositions and Compound Prepositions, a Prepositional Pronoun *contains* its Object and is *not* followed by a noun.

## Prepositions: Simple Prepositions

Many Simple Prepositions lenite or eclipse a following noun, e.g. *do chailín* 'to a girl', *i bpáirc* 'in a field'.

I. When the noun is preceded by the singular Definite Article, the Simple Preposition may:

a) **take a distinctive form** that appears *only* before *an*, e.g.

le 'with' + an 'the' = *leis* an 'with the'  
trí 'through' + an 'the' = *tríd an* 'through the'

b) **combine with *an***, e.g.

i 'in' + an 'the' = *sa/san* 'in the'  
do 'to' + an 'the' = *don* 'to the'

c) **cause lenition or eclipsis**, sometimes *in contrast* to the mutation caused by the Simple Preposition alone, e.g.

i bpáirc 'in a park', *but* sa pháirc 'in the park'  
le peann 'with a pen', *but* leis an bpeann 'with the pen'

**EXAMPLES OF SIMPLE PREPOSITION + DEFINITE ARTICLE + NOUN:**

Thaistil siad tríd an gcathair go ceann trí lá.  
'They travelled through the city for three days.'

San fhómhar, eitleoidh na héin ó dheas.  
'In the autumn, the birds will fly south.'

An raibh na briosaí ite ag na leanaí?  
'Were the biscuits eaten by the children?'

II. If the Object of a Simple Preposition is a pronoun, replace *both* words with a Prepositional Pronoun:

**EXAMPLES OF SIMPLE PREPOSITION + NOUN VS. PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN:**

Labhair le do dheartháir.  
'Speak to your brother.'

Labhair leis.  
'Speak to him.'

Chuirte litreacha chun na mbuaiteoirí.  
'Letters used to be sent to the winners.'

Chuirte litreacha chucu.  
'Letters used to be sent to them.'

III. *Chun* 'toward', *cois* 'beside', *dála* 'concerning', *fearacht* 'like, as', *timpeall* 'around', and *trasna* 'across' cause neither lenition or eclipsis. These six Simple Prepositions are nouns in disguise and govern a following noun in the *genitive* case.

**EXAMPLES OF SIMPLE PREPOSITIONS + NOUN IN THE GENITIVE CASE:**

'An bhfuil tú réidh chun catha?' a deir Séamas Buach.  
'Are you ready for battle?' says Victorious Séamas.'

Is fearr leis cónaí cois na farraige.  
'He prefers living by the sea.'

Fearacht na Féinne, tá sé críonna agus cróga.  
'Like the Fianna, he is wise and courageous.'

IV. If the Object of *cois*, *dála*, *fearacht*, or *timpeall* is a pronoun,<sup>13</sup> replace the combination 'Simple Preposition + Noun' with 'Possessive Adjective + Simple Preposition'. Note that this may require the use of a slightly different idiom consisting of 'Simple Preposition + Possessive Adjective + Simple Preposition' (see first and fourth examples below):



Simple Preposition + Noun in Genitive Case	Possessive Adjective + Simple Preposition
cois <u>na</u> farraige 'by the sea'	lena cois 'by it/her'
dála <u>mo</u> mhic 'in the case of my son'	<u>mo</u> dhála féin 'in my own case'
fearacht <u>na</u> Féinne 'like the Fianna'	<u>a</u> bhfearacht 'like them'
timpeall <u>do</u> thí 'around your house'	i <u>do</u> thimpeall 'around you'

V. If the Object of *chun* is a pronoun, replace the combination 'Simple Preposition + Noun' with a Prepositional Pronoun of *chun* (see **chun**, *Prepositional Pronouns*).

Simple Preposition + Noun in Genitive Case	Prepositional Pronoun
chun <u>cnoic</u> 'toward a hill'	chuige 'toward him/it'
chun <u>cnoc</u> 'toward hills'	chucu 'toward them'

For an explanation of mutations in the following charts, see *The Definite Article and Nouns: Mutations*.

Simple Preposition	Simple Preposition +Noun	Simple Preposition +Singular Definite Article +Noun
<b>ag</b> 'at'	ag bord 'at a table' ag tús 'at start' ag sráid 'at a street' ag abhainn 'at a river'	ag an <u>m</u> bord 'at the table' ag an tús 'at the start' ag an <u>ts</u> ráid 'at the street' ag an abhainn 'at the river'
<b>as</b> 'out of'	as póca 'out of a pocket' as tor 'out of a bush' as súil 'out of an eye' as eanach 'out of a marsh'	as an <u>b</u> póca 'out of the pocket' as an tor 'out of the bush' as an <u>ts</u> úil 'out of the eye' as an eanach 'out of the marsh'
<b>go (dtí)</b> <sup>14</sup> 'to, until'	go maidin 'until morning' go dtí tábhairne 'to a tavern' go dtí siopa 'to a shop' go <u>h</u> am luí 'until bedtime'	go dtí an <u>m</u> haidin sin 'until that morning' go dtí an tábhairne 'to the tavern' go dtí an siopa 'to a shop' go dtí Eanáir 2005 'until January 2005'
<b>thar</b> <sup>15</sup> 'over, past'	thar gleann 'past a valley' thar trá 'past a beach' thar sráid 'past a street' thar eaglais 'past a church'	thar an <u>n</u> gleann 'past the valley' thar an trá 'past the beach' thar an <u>ts</u> ráid 'past the street' thar an eaglais 'past the church'
<b>le</b> <sup>h</sup> 'with, by'	le peann 'with a pen' le tasc 'with a task' le slinn 'with a shingle' le <u>h</u> ubh 'with an egg'	leis an <u>b</u> peann 'with the pen' leis an tasc 'with the tasc' leis an <u>ts</u> linn 'with the shingle' leis an ubh 'with the egg'

Simple Preposition	Simple Preposition +Noun	Simple Preposition +Singular Definite Article +Noun
<b>ar</b> <sup>L</sup> 'on'	ar <u>ch</u> athaoir 'on a chair' ar <u>th</u> eoirainn 'on a border' ar shnáthaid 'on a needle' ar inis 'on an island'	ar an <u>g</u> athaoir 'on the chair' ar an <u>t</u> eoirainn 'on the border' ar an <u>ts</u> náthaid 'on the needle' ar an inis 'on the island'
<b>do</b> <sup>L</sup> 'to, for'	do <u>gh</u> uí 'to a prayer' do <u>dh</u> uine 'to a person' do <u>sh</u> aileach 'to a willow tree' <u>d'</u> fhéar 'for a man' <u>d'</u> aisteoir 'for an actor'	do <u>n</u> <u>gh</u> uí 'to the prayer' do <u>n</u> duine 'to the person' do <u>n</u> <u>ts</u> aileach 'to the willow tree' do <u>n</u> <u>fh</u> éar 'for the man' do <u>n</u> aisteoir 'for the actor'
<b>de</b> <sup>L</sup> 'off, of, from'	de <u>ph</u> láta 'off a plate' de <u>dh</u> íon 'off a roof' de <u>sh</u> íleáil 'off a ceiling' <u>d'</u> fhinné 'from a witness' <u>d'</u> aill 'off a cliff'	de <u>n</u> <u>ph</u> láta 'off the plate' de <u>n</u> díon 'off the roof' de <u>n</u> <u>ts</u> íleáil 'off the ceiling' de <u>n</u> <u>fh</u> inné 'from the witness' de <u>n</u> aill 'off the cliff'
<b>faoi</b> <sup>L16</sup> 'under'	faoi <u>ch</u> loch 'under a rock' faoi <u>th</u> uáille 'under a towel' faoi <u>sh</u> eamair 'under a clover' faoi ordóg 'under a thumb'	faoi <u>n</u> <u>g</u> loch 'under the rock' faoi <u>n</u> tuáille 'under the towel' faoi <u>n</u> <u>ts</u> eamair 'under the clover' faoi <u>n</u> ordóg 'under the thumb'
<b>ó</b> <sup>L</sup> 'from'	ó <u>ch</u> noc 'from a hill' ó <u>th</u> onn 'from a wave' ó <u>sh</u> eachtain 'from a week' ó am 'from time'	ó <u>n</u> <u>g</u> cnoc 'from the hill' ó <u>n</u> tonn 'from a wave' ó <u>n</u> <u>ts</u> eachtain 'from the week' ó <u>n</u> am 'from the time'
<b>roimh</b> <sup>L</sup> 'before'	roimh <u>gh</u> eata 'before a gate' roimh <u>th</u> ráthnóna 'before evening' roimh <u>Ch</u> áisc 'before Easter'	roimh an <u>n</u> geata 'before the gate' roimh an tráthnóna 'before the evening' roimh an <u>g</u> Cáisc seo chugainn 'before next Easter'
<b>trí</b> <sup>L</sup> 'through'	roimh oíche 'before night'	roimh an oíche 'before the night'
<b>trí</b> <sup>L</sup> 'through'	trí <u>bh</u> áisteach 'through rain' trí <u>th</u> alamh 'through land' trí <u>sh</u> olas 'through light' trí uisce 'through water'	tríd an <u>m</u> báisteach 'through the rain' tríd an talamh 'through the land' tríd an solas 'through the light' tríd an uisce 'through the water'
<b>um</b> <sup>L</sup> 'around, about'	um <u>Ch</u> áisc 'around Easter' um <u>th</u> ráthnóna 'in the afternoon' um Shionainn 'along the Shannon' (litir) um <u>th</u> oghchán 'election (letter)'	um an <u>dt</u> aca seo 'around this time'
<b>i</b> <sup>E</sup> 'in'	i mála 'in a bag' i <u>d</u> teach 'in a house' i síon 'in a storm' i <u>n</u> anraith 'in soup'	<u>sa</u> <u>m</u> hála 'in the bag' <u>sa</u> teach 'in the house' <u>sa</u> <u>ts</u> íon 'in the storm' <u>san</u> anraith 'in the soup'

# Prepositions: Compound Prepositions

A **Compound Preposition** consists of a Simple Preposition and a noun that make no sense when they are translated literally. For example, *ar aghaidh an dorais* translates literally and nonsensically as ‘on the face of the door’, but as a Compound Preposition *ar aghaidh* means ‘opposite’, so this phrase translates idiomatically and sensibly as ‘opposite the door’.

I. When the object of a Compound Preposition is a noun, the noun is in the *genitive* case. When this noun is preceded by *an* ‘the’ or *na* ‘the’, any mutation is caused by the Definite Article, *not* by the Compound Preposition.

Compound Prep. +Indefinite Noun	Compound Prep. +Definite Noun
in ainneoin constaicí ‘in spite of obstacles’	in ainneoin <u>na</u> gconstaicí ‘in spite <u>of the</u> obstacles’
ar feadh bliana ‘for a year’	ar feadh <u>na</u> bliana ‘during <u>the</u> year’

## EXAMPLES OF COMPOUND PREPOSITION + NOUN OBJECT:

An é sin do dheartháir le hais mo dheirféar?  
‘Is that your brother beside my sister?’

Bí ciúin, ar son do mháthar breoite!  
‘Be quiet, for the sake of your sick mother!’

Cén fáth ar rith an lacha i ndiaidh na circe?  
‘Why did the duck run after the hen?’

Chuamar faoi choinne uachtair reoite.  
‘We went to get ice cream.’

Má dhéanann sibh éagóir ar na daoine, iompóidh siad in aghaidh bhur bpáirtí polaitíochta.  
‘If you wrong the people, they will turn against your political party.’

Ná habair é os coinne na gcomharsan!  
‘Don’t say it in front of the neighbors!’

Note: Compound Prepositions *do not* combine with any forms of the Definite Article, nor do they have distinctive forms when they are followed by the Definite Article.

II. When a Compound Preposition has a pronoun object, the corresponding possessive adjective follows the *first* element of the Compound Preposition and inflicts its usual mutation on the *second* element of the Compound Preposition.

Theory of Compound Prep. +Pronoun Object	Practice of Compound Prep. +Pronoun Object
ar + mo <sup>L</sup> + aghaidh	ar <u>m</u> ’aghaidh ‘facing me’
ar + do <sup>L</sup> + aghaidh	ar <u>d</u> ’aghaidh ‘facing you’

ar + a <sup>h</sup> + aghaidh	ar a <u>h</u> aghaidh ‘facing her/it’
ar + a <sup>L</sup> + aghaidh	ar a aghaidh ‘facing him/it’
ar + ár <sup>E</sup> + aghaidh	ar ár <u>n</u> -aghaidh ‘facing us’
ar + bhur <sup>E</sup> + aghaidh	ar bhur <u>n</u> -aghaidh ‘facing you’
ar + a <sup>E</sup> + aghaidh	ar a <u>n</u> -aghaidh ‘facing them’

These phrases can also be translated literally as ‘on my face’, ‘on your face’, and so on.

## EXAMPLES OF COMPOUND PREPOSITION + PRONOUN OBJECT:

An é sin do dheartháir le m’ais?  
‘Is that your brother beside me?’

Bí ciúin, ar do shon féin!  
‘Be quiet, for your own sake!’

Cén fáth ar rith an lacha ina diaidh?  
‘Why did the duck run after her?’

Chuamar faoina choinne.  
‘We went to get it.’

Nár mhaith le bhur leanáí dul inár n-ionad?  
‘Wouldn’t your children like to go in our place?’

Má dhéanann sibh éagóir ar na daoine, iompóidh siad in bhur n-aghaidh.  
‘If you wrong the people, they will turn against you.’

Ná habair é os a gcoinne!  
‘Don’t say it in front of them!’

III. Some Compound Prepositions consist of ‘Simple Preposition + Noun + Simple Preposition’. This type of Compound Preposition is followed by a noun object in the *dative* case. When the object is a pronoun, replace the second Simple Preposition with the appropriate Prepositional Pronoun.

Compound Prep. +Noun Object	Compound Prep. +Prepositional Pronoun
fá dtaobh de na <u>ceisteanna</u> ‘concerning the <u>questions</u> ’	fá dtaobh <u>díobh</u> ‘concerning <u>them</u> ’
in aice leis an <u>mbád</u> ‘near the <u>boat</u> ’	in aice <u>leis</u> ‘near <u>it</u> ’

The following Compound Prepositions are grouped according to similarity of meaning. Note that **the examples illustrate two different uses of the possessive adjective: 1) as a substitute for the pronoun**, in the third column, **2) as a qualifier of the noun**, in the fourth column.

Compound Preposition	Comp. Prep. + Noun	Comp. Prep. +Pronoun	Comp. Prep. +Noun Qualified by Poss. Adj.	Compound Preposition	Comp. Prep. + Noun	Comp. Prep. +Pronoun	Comp. Prep. +Noun Qualified by Poss. Adj.
<b>i gcoinne</b> 'against'	i gcoinne an tsrutha 'against the stream'	ina coinne 'against her'	i gcoinne a tola 'against her will'	<b>i gcomhair</b> 'for, for the purpose of'	i gcomhair an turais 'for the trip'	i do chomhair 'for you'	i gcomhair do dheirféar 'for your sister'
<b>in ainneoin</b> 'in spite of'	in ainneoin drochaimsire 'in spite of bad weather'	ina n-ainneoin 'in spite of them'	in ainneoin a gcuid saibhris 'in spite of their wealth'	<b>faoi choinne</b> 'to get, for'	faoi choinne an airgid 'to get the money'	faoi mo choinne 'to get me'	faoi choinne m'airgid 'to get my money'
<b>in aghaidh</b> 'against'	in aghaidh na fianaise 'against the evidence'	i m'aghaidh 'against me'	in aghaidh m'fhianaise 'against my evidence'	<b>thar ceann</b> 'for the sake of, on behalf of'	thar ceann an choiste 'on behalf of the committee'	thar a gceann 'for their sake'	thar ceann a gcairde 'for the sake of their friends'
<b>in éadan</b> 'against, in the face of'	in éadan na gaoithe 'against the wind'	inár n-éadan 'against us'	in éadan ár dtola 'against our will'	<b>ar son</b> 'for the sake of, on behalf of'	ar son na hÉireann 'for the sake of Ireland'	ar ár son 'for our sake'	ar son ár dtíre 'for the sake of our country'
<b>ar aghaidh</b> 'opposite, facing'	ar aghaidh an dorais 'opposite the door'	ar a haghaidh 'opposite her'	ar aghaidh a dorais 'opposite her door'	<b>i dtaobh</b> 'about, regarding'	i dtaobh litreach 'about a letter'	ina thaobh 'about him'	i dtaobh a litreach 'about his letter'
<b>os comhair</b> 'in front of, before'	os comhair na cuideachta 'in front of the company'	os bhur gcomhair 'in front of you'	os comhair bhur súl 'before your eyes'	<b>in ionad</b> 'instead of'	in ionad mic 'instead of a son'	ina ionad 'instead of him'	in ionad a mhic 'instead of his son'
<b>os coinne</b> 'facing, in front of, before'	os coinne an tsaoil 'in front of everyone'	os a choinne 'in front of him'	os coinne a dhá shúl 'before his two eyes'	<b>os cionn</b> 'above'	os cionn na cathrach 'above the city'	os do chionn 'above you'	os cionn do chumais 'above your ability'
<b>le linn</b> 'during, in the course of'	le linn na hoiche 'during the night'	lenár linn féin 'in our own time'	le linn ár n-óige 'during our youth'	<b>faoi bhun</b> 'beneath'	faoi bhun na talún 'beneath the ground'	faoinár mbun 'beneath us'	faoi bhun ár gcos 'beneath our feet'
<b>i rith</b> 'during, in the course of'	i rith an ama 'all the time'		i rith mo shaoil 'during my life'	<b>i lár</b> 'in the middle of'	i lár an urláir 'in the middle of the floor'		i lár ár n-urláir 'in the middle of our floor'
<b>i gcaitheamh</b> 'during'	i gcaitheamh na saoire 'during the holiday'			<b>i gceann</b> 'at the end of'	i gceann coicíse 'at the end of a fortnight'		i gceann bhur dtréimhse saoire 'at the end of your vacation time'
<b>go ceann</b> 'for the duration of'	go ceann míosa 'for the duration of a month'		i gcaitheamh a shaoil 'during his life'	<b>ar chúl</b> 'behind, at the back of'	ar chúl an tí 'behind the house'	ar mo chúl 'behind me'	ar chúl mo thí 'behind my house'
<b>ar feadh</b> 'for the duration of'	ar feadh an tsamhraidh 'for the duration of the summer'		go ceann ár gcúrsa 'for the duration of our course'	<b>le hais</b> 'beside'	le hais an ghadhair 'beside the dog'	lena hais 'beside her'	le hais a gadhair 'beside her dog'
<b>le haghaidh</b> 'for the use, for the purpose of'	le haghaidh iascaireachta 'for fishing'	lena aghaidh sin 'for that purpose'	ar feadh a shaoil 'for the duration of his life'	<b>faoi dhéin</b> 'toward'	faoi dhéin an tseomra 'toward the room'	faoi mo dhéin 'toward me'	faoi dhéin mo sheomra 'toward my room'
			le haghaidh ár gcuairteoirí 'for the use of our visitors'	<b>i ndiaidh</b> 'after'	i ndiaidh na gcapall 'after the horses'	ina ndiaidh 'after them'	i ndiaidh a gcapall 'after their horses'
				<b>i láthair</b> 'in the presence of'	i láthair Dé 'in the presence of God'	ina láthair 'in his presence'	i láthair a athar 'in his father's presence'

Compound Preposition	Comp. Prep. + Noun	Comp. Prep. +Pronoun	Comp. Prep. +Noun Qualified by Poss. Adj.
<b>i bhfochair</b> 'in the company of'	i bhfochair <u>carad</u> 'in <u>a friend's</u> company'	i <u>d'fhochair</u> 'in <u>your</u> company'	i bhfochair <u>do charad</u> 'in <u>your friend's</u> company'
<b>i dteannta</b> 'along with, together with'	i dteannta <u>Áine</u> 'along with <u>Áine</u> '	ina <u>teannta</u> 'along with <u>her</u> '	i dteannta <u>a hiníonacha</u> 'along with <u>her daughters</u> '
<b>i measc</b> 'among'	i measc <u>cairde</u> 'among <u>friends</u> '	inár <u>measc</u> 'among <u>us</u> '	i measc <u>ár gcairde</u> 'among <u>our friends</u> '
<b>ar fud</b> 'throughout, among'	ar fud <u>na háite</u> 'throughout <u>the place</u> '		ar fud <u>ár dtíre</u> 'throughout <u>our land</u> '
<b>as ucht</b> 'on account of, for the sake of'	as ucht <u>Dé</u> 'for <u>God's</u> sake'	as <u>m'uchtsa</u> 'for <u>my</u> sake'	as ucht <u>mo chuairte</u> 'on account of <u>my visit</u> '
<b>de bharr</b> 'as a result of'	de bharr <u>rachmais</u> 'as a result of <u>prosperity</u> '	dá <u>bharr sin</u> 'as a result of <u>that</u> '	de bharr <u>a shaothair</u> 'as a result of <u>his work</u> '
<b>de réir</b> 'according to, in accordance with'	de réir <u>dlí</u> 'in accordance with <u>the law</u> '	dá <u>réir sin</u> 'according to <u>that</u> '	de réir <u>mo bharúla</u> 'according to <u>my opinion</u> '

## Prepositions: Prepositional Pronouns

When the object of a Simple Preposition is a pronoun, replace *both* words with a Prepositional Pronoun.

### EXAMPLES OF PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUNS:

Inis dom cad a tharla.  
'Tell me what happened.'

Nach raibh sí in éineacht leat?  
'Wasn't she along with you?'

Mholadh a haintín leabhair di.  
'Her aunt used to recommend books to her.'

Cén fáth nach mbeadh a eochair aige?  
'Why wouldn't he have his key?'

Nár thite an spéir orainn!  
'May the sky not fall on us!'

Féachaigí ar na caora romhaibh!  
'Look at the berries before you!'

Bainfear na síolta astu agus déanfar subh díobh.  
'The seeds will be extracted out of them and jam will be made from them.'

Simple Prep.	1 <sup>st</sup> P. Sg.	2 <sup>nd</sup> P. Sg.	3 <sup>rd</sup> P. Sg. ♂	3 <sup>rd</sup> P. Sg. ♀	1 <sup>st</sup> P. Plural	2 <sup>nd</sup> P. Plural	3 <sup>rd</sup> P. Plural
<b>ag</b> 'at'	<b>agam</b> 'at me'	<b>agat</b> 'at you'	<b>aige</b> 'at him'	<b>aici</b> 'at her'	<b>againn</b> 'at us'	<b>agaibh</b> 'at you'	<b>acu</b> 'at them'
<b>ar</b> 'on'	<b>orm</b> 'on me'	<b>ort</b> 'on you'	<b>air</b> 'on him'	<b>uirthi</b> 'on her'	<b>orainn</b> 'on us'	<b>oraibh</b> 'on you'	<b>orthu</b> 'on them'
<b>le</b> 'with, by'	<b>liom</b> 'with me'	<b>leat</b> 'with you'	<b>leis</b> 'with him'	<b>léi</b> 'with her'	<b>linn</b> 'with us'	<b>libh</b> 'with you'	<b>leo</b> 'with them'
<b>do</b> 'to, for'	<b>dom</b> 'to me'	<b>duit</b> 'to you'	<b>dó</b> 'to him'	<b>di</b> 'to her'	<b>dúinn</b> 'to us'	<b>daoibh</b> 'to you'	<b>dóibh</b> 'to them'
<b>de</b> 'off, of, from'	<b>díom</b> 'off me'	<b>díot</b> 'off you'	<b>de</b> 'off him'	<b>di</b> 'off her'	<b>dínn</b> 'off us'	<b>díbh</b> 'off you'	<b>díobh</b> 'off them'
<b>faoi</b> 'under'	<b>fúm</b> 'under me'	<b>fút</b> 'under you'	<b>faoi</b> 'under him'	<b>fúithi</b> 'under her'	<b>fúinn</b> 'under us'	<b>fúibh</b> 'under you'	<b>fúthu</b> 'under them'
<b>ó</b> 'from'	<b>uaim</b> 'from me'	<b>uait</b> 'from you'	<b>uaidh</b> 'from him'	<b>uaithi</b> 'from her'	<b>uainn</b> 'from us'	<b>uaibh</b> 'from you'	<b>uathu</b> 'from them'
<b>i</b> 'in'	<b>ionam</b> 'in me'	<b>ionat</b> 'in you'	<b>ann</b> 'in him'	<b>inti</b> 'in her'	<b>ionainn</b> 'in us'	<b>ionaibh</b> 'in you'	<b>iontu</b> 'in them'
<b>as</b> 'out of'	<b>asam</b> 'out of me'	<b>asat</b> 'out of you'	<b>as</b> 'out of him'	<b>aisti</b> 'out of her'	<b>asainn</b> 'out of us'	<b>asaibh</b> 'out of you'	<b>astu</b> 'out of them'
<b>roimh</b> 'before'	<b>romham</b> 'before me'	<b>romhat</b> 'before you'	<b>roimhe</b> 'before him'	<b>roimpi</b> 'before her'	<b>romhainn</b> 'before us'	<b>romhaibh</b> 'before you'	<b>rompu</b> 'before them'
<b>trí</b> 'through'	<b>tríom</b> 'through me'	<b>tríot</b> 'through you'	<b>tríd</b> 'through him'	<b>trithi</b> 'through her'	<b>trínn</b> 'through us'	<b>tríbh</b> 'through you'	<b>tríothu</b> 'through them'
<b>chuig</b> <sup>17</sup> 'toward'	<b>chugam</b> 'toward me'	<b>chugat</b> 'toward you'	<b>chuige</b> 'toward him'	<b>chuici</b> 'toward her'	<b>chugainn</b> 'toward us'	<b>chugaibh</b> 'toward you'	<b>chucu</b> 'toward them'
<b>thar</b> 'past'	<b>tharam</b> 'past me'	<b>tharat</b> 'past you'	<b>thairis</b> 'past him'	<b>thairsti</b> 'past her'	<b>tharainn</b> 'past us'	<b>tharaibh</b> 'past you'	<b>tharstu</b> 'past them'
<b>um</b> 'around'	<b>umam</b> 'around me'	<b>umat</b> 'around you'	<b>uime</b> 'around him'	<b>uimpi</b> 'around her'	<b>umainn</b> 'around us'	<b>umaibh</b> 'around you'	<b>umpu</b> 'around them'
<b>idir</b> 'among, between'					<b>eadrainn</b> 'among us'	<b>eadraibh</b> 'among you'	<b>eatarthu</b> 'among them'

# Independent vs. Dependent Clauses

A clause consists of a subject, a verb, and either an object or a predicate, and a clause contributes to a longer sentence. To put it another way, each of the following is a sentence: 'Matthew made grapefruit sorbet.' 'Arwen ate some.' 'Leia got the last spoonful.' But when they contribute to a longer sentence, they are clauses: 'Matthew made grapefruit sorbet and Arwen ate some, but Leia got the last spoonful.'

There are two types of clause: 1) Main (= Independent) and 2) Dependent (= Subordinate).

A Main Clause can stand alone as a sentence and is essentially a statement. If it begins with an Irregular Verb that has independent and dependent forms, the usual rules apply: an affirmative statement takes the independent verb-form and a negative statement takes the dependent verb-form, if one exists.

## EXAMPLES OF MAIN CLAUSES:

Chonaic an sionnach silíní, ach ní raibh sé in ann teacht orthu, mar sin dúirt sé gur searbh a bhí siad ar chaoi ar bith.  
'The fox saw cherries, but he couldn't reach them, so he said that they were sour anyway.'

Mothaíonn Bradán Llyn Llyw crága lolar Gwernabwy agus tumann sé go domhain chun a namhaid a bhá.  
'The Salmon of Llyn Llyw feels the talons of the Eagle of Gwernabwy and he dives deep to drown his enemy.'

Seo é mo ghealltanais: béarfaidh mé liom do cheannsa nó fágfaidh mé mo cheannsa leat!  
'This is my vow: I will carry off your head or I will leave my head with you!'

♥ The first example refers to a saying, *dála an tsionnaigh agus na silíní* or *dála an mhadra rua agus na silíní* 'like the fox and the cherries', paralleling the saying 'sour grapes' in reference to Aesop's fable about another unsuccessful fox in pursuit of another unreachable fruit. The second example refers to an event in the Middle Welsh tale *Culhwch ag Olwen* 'Culhwch and Olwen', edited and translated by Patrick K. Ford in *The Mabinogi and Other Medieval Welsh Tales* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), pp. 119-58. The third example is a typical warrior's vow from *Táin Bó Cúailnge* 'The Cattle-Rustling of Cúailnge', *Recension I*, edited and translated by Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976).

A Dependent Clause *cannot* stand alone as a sentence and 'depends on' (= 'is subordinate to') a Main Clause. A Dependent Clause begins with a

subordinating conjunction, a relative particle, or an interrogative. Were it not for this initial word, many Dependent Clauses would be Main Clauses.

## EXAMPLES OF DEPENDENT CLAUSES:

Abair leis teacht in éineacht linn más féidir leis.  
'Tell him to come with us if he can.'

Feicfidh sibh go bhfuil spás a dhóthain inár ngluaisteán.  
'You will see that there is enough space in our car.'

Bhí sé a cúig a chlog nuair a shroicheadar an bhialann.  
'It was five o'clock when we reached the restaurant.'

Níl a fhios acu cad ba mhaith leo a ithe.  
'They don't know what they would like to eat.'

Tá an giolla ag oscailt an bhuidéal fiona a thug sé chun an bhoird.  
'The waiter is opening the bottle of wine that he brought to the table.'

Tógaimis suas na gloiní a ndoirteann sé an fion iontu.  
'Let us raise the glasses into which he pours the wine.'

Note: 'Main' and 'Subordinate', 'Independent' and 'Dependent' are the usual pairs of terms. I prefer to pair 'Main' and 'Dependent' because 'Main' suggests a type of clause to which others can be attached, while 'Dependent' is a reminder that **the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs must be used after the Indirect Relatives *a<sup>E</sup>* and *nach<sup>E</sup>*, the Subordinating Conjunctions *go<sup>E</sup>*, *nach<sup>E</sup>*, and *mura<sup>E</sup>*.**

*Má<sup>L</sup>*, *dá<sup>E</sup>*, *mura<sup>E</sup>*, and *mura<sup>L</sup>* are subordinating conjunctions that mark the start of a Dependent Clause. If they are followed by an Irregular Verb, the usual rules for use of dependent forms apply (see *Dependent Clauses: Indirect Speech*).

As usual the Main Clause may precede or follow the Dependent Clause, but **the tense and mood of the verb in the Dependent Clause determine the tense and mood of the verb in the Main Clause**, because the events described in the Main Clause *cannot* occur earlier than the events described in the Dependent Clause.

## Dependent Clauses: Direct vs. Indirect Quotation

Quotation reports a person's speech, thoughts, feelings, or perceptions.

Direct Quotation and Indirect Quotation differ in two respects: 1) how the quotation is identified 2) the degree of accuracy claimed for the quotation.

I. A Direct Quotation is set off by quotation marks and implies a verbatim report of what was said or thought.



### EXAMPLES OF DIRECT QUOTATION:

'I've seen you before', said the cat to the warm milk.

The cynic claimed, 'There's no cure for love except marriage.'

Caitriona Pháidín told Big Brian, 'I wouldn't marry you, you ugly scarecrow, if green scums grew on me for want of a man.'

♥ The first two examples are based on proverbs, *'Chonaic mé cheana thú' – mar a dúirt an cat leis an mbainne te* "I've seen you before" – as the cat said to the warm milk, comparable to the pick-up line 'Haven't we met before?' and *níl aon leigheas ar an ngrá ach pósadh* 'there's no cure for love except marriage'. The third example draws on an unforgettable line from Máirtín Ó Cadhain's *Cré na Cille* (Baile Átha Cliath: Sáirséal agus Dill, 1949), *'Ní phósfainn thú a scóllacháin ghránna dhá dteagadh cailemhineogaí orm d'uireasa fir'* 'I wouldn't marry you, you ugly scarecrow, if green scums grew on me for want of a man'.

II. An Indirect Quotation is set off by a subordinating conjunction that turns it into a dependent clause. Indirect Quotation implies a recollection or impression of what was said, thought, felt, or perceived.

### EXAMPLES OF INDIRECT QUOTATION:

The cat said that it has seen the warm milk before.

The cynic claimed that there is no cure for love, except marriage.

Caitriona Pháidín told Big Brian that she wouldn't marry him if green scums grew on her for want of a man.

**Quotation can report questions, commands, and exclamations as well as statements.** A Direct Quotation is enclosed by quotation marks. An Indirect Quotation uses interrogatives (e.g. 'if', 'whether', 'which') to mark the beginning of a question, the infinitive of the verb (e.g. 'to go', 'to be patient') to mark the beginning of a command *in English*, and the subordinating conjunction 'that' to mark the beginning of a statement or an exclamation.

### EXAMPLE OF QUOTATION OF A QUESTION:

'Have you really seen me before?'  
the warm milk asked the cat. Direct

The warm milk asked the cat  
if he had really seen it before. Indirect

### EXAMPLE OF QUOTATION OF A COMMAND:

'Since there is no other cure for love,  
marry me', ordered the cynic. Direct

The cynic ordered his love to marry him. Indirect

### EXAMPLE OF QUOTATION OF AN EXCLAMATION:

'I would not wed Big Brian if green  
scums grew on me for want of a  
man!', declared Caitriona Pháidín. Direct

Caitriona Pháidín declared that she  
would not wed Big Brian if green  
scums grew on her for want of a man Indirect

## Dependent Clauses: Direct Quotation

**Direct Quotation in Irish is exactly the same as it is in English** and the same rules apply whether the verb in the quotation is regular, irregular, or the Copula.

### EXAMPLES OF DIRECT QUOTATION WITH REGULAR VERBS:

'Fan go bpósfaidh tú,' mar a dúirt an fear leis an ngorria.  
'Wait until you're married,' as the man said to the hare.

Cheap an giorria, 'Má phósaím, an maolóidh mo luas?'  
'The hare thought, 'If I marry, will my speed decrease?''

♥ The first example is a proverb, the second an interpretation of it.

### EXAMPLES OF DIRECT QUOTATION WITH IRREGULAR VERBS:

D'fhiafraíomar de Philip agus de Mháiréad, 'An bhfaca sibh an  
mháthair shúigh?'  
'We asked Pilib and Máiréad, 'Did you see the squid?''

D'fhreagair siad, 'Chonaiceamar, ach níor rugamar uirthi!'  
'They answered, 'We saw it, but we didn't catch it!''

### EXAMPLES OF DIRECT QUOTATION WITH THE COPULA:

'Is fearr liom madraí ná cait,' a deir Moira.  
'I prefer dogs to cats,' says Moira.

'Nach bean chiallmhar tú!' a deir a madra, Duffy.  
'Aren't you a sensible woman!' says her dog, Duffy.

## Dependent Clauses: Indirect Quotation

**Indirect Quotation in Irish is the same as it is in English except that the subordinating conjunction *always* appears before the dependent clause.** English permits *either* 'He said that he would be there' (subordinating conjunction included) *or* 'He said he would be there' (subordinating conjunction implied), but Irish accepts *only* *Dúirt sé go mbeadh sé ansin* 'He said that he would be there'.

This is true of all Indirect Quotations *except* 1) questions, in which ‘that’ is replaced with an interrogative 2) commands, in which ‘that’ is replaced with a Verbal Noun, and ‘that not’ is replaced with ‘gan + Verbal Noun’ (see *The Verbal Noun: Functions*).

The subordinating conjunctions for all verbs *except* the Copula are:

	All Tenses and Moods <i>except</i> the Past	Past Tense <i>only</i>
Affirmative	go <sup>E</sup>	gur <sup>L</sup>
Negative	nach <sup>E</sup>	nár <sup>L</sup>
Affirmative Interrogative	an <sup>E</sup>	ar <sup>L</sup>
Negative Interrogative	nach <sup>E</sup>	nár <sup>L</sup>

Note: If an Irregular Verb has dependent forms, they *must* be used after a subordinating conjunction of any kind. *Fuair*, *dúirt*, and dependent past-tense forms follow *go<sup>E</sup>*, *nach<sup>E</sup>*, and *an<sup>E</sup>* rather than *gur<sup>L</sup>*, *nár<sup>L</sup>*, and *ar<sup>L</sup>*.

### EXAMPLES OF QUOTATION WITH REGULAR VERBS:

Direct Quotation

Indirect Quotation

#### Statement

‘Teastaíonn deoch uait,’ a deir Breandán.  
‘You need a drink,’ says Breandán.’

Deir Breandán go dteastaíonn deoch uait.  
‘Breandán says that you need a drink.’

#### Exclamation

Dúirt an file, ‘Chaill Dante a chiall!’  
‘The poet said, ‘Dante lost his mind!’

Dúirt an file gur chaill Dante a chiall!  
‘The poet said that Dante lost his mind!’

#### Question

Fiafraí de Melanie ‘Ar bhuaíl tú le do chara in Albain?’  
‘Ask Melanie, ‘Did you meet your friend in Scotland?’

Fiafraí de Melanie ar bhuaíl sí lena cara in Albain?  
‘Ask Melanie did she meet her friend in Scotland?’

#### Negative Question

Cuireadh an cheist ar Jennifer, ‘Nár chuir an blas déistin ort?’  
‘Jennifer was asked the question, ‘Didn’t the taste disgust you?’

Cuireadh an cheist ar Jennifer nár chuir an blas déistin uirthi?  
‘Jennifer was asked the question didn’t the taste disgust her?’

#### Imperative

Dúirt Tim, ‘Tomhais cén cárta atá agam!’  
‘Tim said, ‘Guess which card I have!’

Dúirt Tim a thomhas cén cárta atá aige.  
‘Tim said to guess which card he has.’

Direct Quotation

Indirect Quotation

#### Negative Imperative

Ach dúirt Morgan, ‘Ná tomhais!’  
‘But Morgan said, ‘Don’t guess!’

Ach dúirt Morgan gan tomhas!  
‘But Morgan said not to guess!’

Examples of Quotation with Irregular Verbs:

#### Statement

‘Tá Beth ag feitheamh leat,’ a deir Katie.  
‘Beth is waiting for you,’ says Katie.’

Deir Katie go bhfuil Beth ag feitheamh leat.  
‘Katie says that Beth is waiting for you.’

#### Exclamation

Chreideadh Dáibhí, ‘Déarfadh Matt rud ar bith!’  
‘Dáibhí used to believe, ‘Matt would say anything at all!’

Chreideadh Dáibhí go ndéarfadh Matt rud ar bith!  
‘Dáibhí used to believe that Matt would say anything at all!’

#### Question

Chualathas Kristin ag rá le Pádraigín, ‘An bhfuair tú an obair bhaile?’  
‘Kristin was heard saying to Pádraigín, ‘Did you get the homework?’

Chualathas Kristin ag rá le Pádraigín an bhfuair sí an obair bhaile?  
‘Kristin was heard saying to Pádraigín did she get the homework?’

#### Negative Question

Cloisfear Seosamh ag rá le Carol ‘Nár chuala tú nár tugadh obair bhaile don rang?’  
‘Seosamh will be heard telling Carol ‘Didn’t you hear that homework wasn’t given to the class?’

Cloisfear Seosamh ag rá le Carol nár chuala sí nár tugadh obair bhaile don rang?  
‘Seosamh will be heard telling Carol didn’t she hear that homework wasn’t given to the class?’

#### Imperative

Dúirt Fiona le Tomás, ‘Tabhair dom an scrúdú!’  
‘Fiona told Tomás, ‘Give me the test!’

Dúirt Fiona le Tomás an scrúdú a thabhairt di.  
‘Fiona told Tomás to give her the test.’

#### Negative Imperative

Ach dúirt Aindrias, ‘Ná tabhair di é.’  
‘But Aindrias said, ‘Don’t give it to her!’

Ach dúirt Aindrias gan é a thabhairt di!  
‘But Aindrias said not to give it to her!’

**When the verb in an Indirect Quotation is the Copula**, the combination ‘Subordinating Conjunction + Verb’ is replaced by either 1) an interrogative form of the Copula, for a question, or 2) a dependent form of the Copula, for anything other than a question.

Here are the dependent and interrogative forms of the Copula:

	Present Tense	Present Tense before Vowel	Past or Conditional	P/C before Vowel or 'fh + Vowel'
Dependent Affirm.	gur	gurb	gur <sup>L</sup>	gurbh <sup>L</sup>
Dependent Neg.	nach	nach	nár <sup>L</sup>	nárbh <sup>L</sup>
Interrogative	an	an	ar <sup>L</sup>	arbh <sup>L</sup>
Neg. Interrogative	nach	nach	nár <sup>L</sup>	nárbh <sup>L</sup>

### EXAMPLES OF QUOTATION WITH THE COPULA:

Direct Quotation

#### Statement

'Is dual do mhac an chait luch a mharú', a deir Risteard.  
'It's natural for the cat's son to kill a mouse', says Risteard.'

#### Exclamation

Freagraíonn úinéir an chait, 'Níorbh fhéidir leis luch a mharú!' 'The cat's owner replies, 'He couldn't kill a mouse!'

#### Question

Ach bhí Colin ag machnamh, 'An fíor gur dual dó luch a mharú?' 'But Colin was wondering, 'Is it true that it's natural for him to kill a mouse?'

#### Negative Question

D'fhiafródh an cat díobh, 'Nár mhian libh an fhírinne a fháil amach?' 'The cat would ask them, 'Wouldn't you like to find out the truth?'

Indirect Quotation

Deir Risteard gur dual do mhac an chait luch a mharú.  
'Risteard says that it's natural for the cat's son to kill a mouse.'

Freagraíonn úinéir an chait nárbh fhéidir leis luch a mharú!  
'The cat's owner replies that he couldn't kill a mouse!'

Ach bhí Colin ag machnamh an fíor gur dual dó luch a mharú?'  
'But Colin was wondering is it true that it's natural for him to kill a mouse?'

D'fhiafródh an cat díobh nár mhian libh an fhírinne a fháil amach?  
'The cat would ask them wouldn't they want to find out the truth?'

## Dependent Clauses: Direct Relative Clauses

In a Direct Relative Clause, the antecedent of the Direct Relative Particle (DRP) is either the Subject or the Direct Object of the following verb. Since a Direct Relative Clause in which the DRP has a subject antecedent is grammatically identical to a Direct Relative Clause in which the DRP has an object antecedent, the intended role of the antecedent must be determined from context, and usually one interpretation is more logical than the alternative.

For example, *chonaic sí an capall a d'ith an t-úll* could mean either 'she saw the horse that ate the apple' or 'she saw the horse that the apple ate'. But unless this sentence occurred in a passage about carnivorous fruit, an

apple-eating horse is more likely than a horse-eating apple, so *an capall* 'the horse' must be the subject rather than the object of the verb.

The forms of the DRP for all verbs *except* the Copula are:

	Present, Future, Imperfect, Conditional	Past
Affirmative	a <sup>L</sup>	a <sup>L</sup>
Negative	nach <sup>E</sup>	nár <sup>L</sup>

Note: If an Irregular Verb has dependent forms, they *must* be used after the negative DRP. *Fuair* 'got', *dúirt* 'said', and dependent past-tense forms follow *nach<sup>E</sup>* rather than *nár<sup>L</sup>*.

### EXAMPLES OF THE DRP WITH SUBJECT ANTECEDENT:

Cuirfidh an dúchas a bhrisfidh trí shúile an chait eagla ar an luch. 'The nature that will break through the eyes of the cat will scare the mouse.'

An gcloiseann tú tafann teann an mhadra ghearr atá ina chlós féin? 'Do you hear the confident bark of the short dog that is in his own yard?'

Is olc an chearc nach scríobann di féin. 'It's a poor hen that does not scratch for herself.'

Is oth leis an bhfear nár phós anuraidh gur phós a leannán fear eile. 'The man who did not marry last year regrets that his love married another man.'

Fiafraigh de na mná nach raibh ag ól cár imigh an leann! 'Ask the women who were not drinking where the liquor went!'

Bhí an cat nach bhfaca an luch ag rince as baile. 'The cat that did not see the mouse dancing was away from home.'

♥ All examples except for the fifth are based on proverbs: *briseann an dúchas trí shuíle an chait* 'nature breaks through the cat's eyes', *is teann gach madra gearr i ndoras a thí féin* 'every short dog is confident in his own doorway', *is olc an chearc nach scríobann di féin* 'it's a poor hen that does not scratch for herself', *ní ólann na mná leann ach imíonn sé lena linn* 'women don't drink alcohol but it vanishes in their presence', *nuair a bhíonn an cat as baile bíonn an luch ag rince* 'when the cat is away, the mouse is dancing'.

### EXAMPLES OF THE DRP WITH OBJECT ANTECEDENT:

Féach ar an luch a mharaigh mac an chait! 'Look at the mouse that the cat's son killed!'

Cad as ar tháinig an scread a chuala na hUltaigh? 'Whence came the scream that the Ulstermen heard?'

Is dall an chiaróg nach n-aithníonn ciaróg eile.  
 [is blind the beetle that doesn't recognize a beetle other]  
 'It's a blind beetle that doesn't recognize another beetle.'

Níor baineadh san fhómhar an barr nár cuireadh san earrach.  
 'The crop that was not planted in the spring was not harvested in the fall.'

Ithimis an phraiseach nach raibh doirte amach.  
 'Let us eat the porridge that wasn't spilled.'

Ní gá duit luí sa leaba nach ndearna tú.  
 'You need not lie in the bed that you didn't make.'

♥ The first, third, and fourth examples are based on proverbs: *céard a dhéanfadh mac an chait ach luch a mharú?* 'what would the cat's son do but kill a mouse?' comparable to 'like father, like son' or 'the apple doesn't fall far from the tree', *aithníonn ciaróg ciaróg eile* 'a beetle recognizes another beetle' comparable to 'it takes one to know one', and *mura gcuirfidh tú san earrach ní bhainfidh tú san fhómhar* 'if you don't plant in the spring you won't harvest in the fall'. The second example refers to the story *Longes mac nUislenn* 'Exile of the Sons of Uisliu'. The fifth example was suggested by the saying *tá an phraiseach doirte amach* 'the porridge is spilled', i.e. things are in a mess and there's no going back.

There is no need for DRP when the Copula is the verb in a Direct Relative Clause because **the Copula has special direct-relative forms**. The present-tense direct-relative forms of the Copula mean 'that is/are' or 'who is/are', and the past/conditional direct-relative forms mean 'that was/were', 'who was/were', or 'that/who would be'.

The direct-relative forms of the Copula are:

	Present Tense	Present Tense before Vowel	Past or Conditional	P/C before Vowel or 'f + Vowel'
Direct Relative	is	is	ba <sup>L</sup>	ab <sup>L</sup>
Neg. Dir. Relative	nach	nach	nár <sup>L</sup>	nárbh <sup>L</sup>

### EXAMPLES OF DIRECT-RELATIVE FORMS OF THE COPULA:

Is é Jeaic na Scolóige an fear is maith le Caitriona Pháidín.  
 [is Jeaic na Scolóige the man who is good by Catriona Pháidín]  
 'Jeaic na Scolóige is the man whom Caitriona Pháidín likes.'

Ba í a deirfiúr Neil an bhean ab fhuath léi.  
 [was her sister Neil the woman who was a hate by her]  
 'Her sister Neil was the woman whom she hated.'

Is í 'Nóra na gCosa Lofa' an bhean nach maith le Caitriona Pháidín.  
 [is Nóra na gCosa Lofa the woman that is not good by Caitriona Pháidín]  
 'Nóra na gCosa Lofa is the woman whom Caitriona Pháidín doesn't like.'

Chuimhnigh sí ar an masla nárbh fhéidir léi a mhaitheamh.  
 [remembered she the insult that was not a possibility by her to forgive]  
 'She remembered the insult that she wasn't able to forgive.'

♥ These examples refer to events in Máirtín Ó Cadhain's *Cré na Cille* (Baile Átha Cliath: Sáirséal agus Dill, 1949), a book which itself merits the learning of Modern Irish.

## Dependent Clauses: Indirect Relative Clauses

In an Indirect Relative Clause, the antecedent of the Indirect Relative Particle (IRP) can be anything **except the subject or direct object of the following verb**. By itself the IRP indicates merely that some kind of indirect-relative relationship exists between the antecedent and the verb, and that translation of the IRP will include 'which', 'whom', or 'whose'. **The IRP is always paired with:**

- 1) a Possessive Adjective,
- 2a-b) a Simple Preposition, or
- 3) a Prepositional Pronoun that completes the meaning of the IRP and specifies the nature of the indirect-relative relationship (e.g. 'of which', 'for whom', 'to whose').

In an **affirmative** Indirect Relative Clause, the IRP may be paired with 1) a Possessive Adjective, 2a-b) a Simple Preposition, or c) a Prepositional Pronoun.

In a **negative** Indirect Relative Clause, the IRP may be paired with 1) a Possessive Adjective or 3) a Prepositional Pronoun, but *not* with 2a-b) a Simple Preposition.

Whereas Direct Relative Clauses in Irish always translate as Direct Relative Clauses in English, **Indirect Relative Clauses in Irish sometimes translate as Direct Relative Clauses in English**, e.g. the *Indirect* Relative Clause *an té a bhfuil an peann aige* [the person at whom the pen is] translates idiomatically into English as the *Direct* Relative Clause 'the person who has the pen'. In the following examples, if the Indirect Relative Clause is undetectable in the 'idiomatic translation', look for it in the [literal translation].

The forms of the IRP for all verbs *except* the Copula are:

	Present, Future, Imperfect, Conditional	Past Only
Affirmative	a <sup>E</sup>	ar <sup>L</sup>
Negative	nach <sup>E</sup>	nár <sup>L</sup>

I. When an IRP is paired with a Possessive Adjective, the Possessive Adjective immediately follows the IRP.

### EXAMPLES OF THE IRP WITH A POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVE:

Cé acu díobh an fear a raibh a mhac pósta cheana?  
[which at them of them the man whom was his son married already]  
'Which of them is the man whose son was married already?'

Cogar, an iadsan na deirfiúracha a bhfuair a n-athair bás?  
[whisper, are they the sisters whom got their father death]  
'Say, are they the sisters whose father died?'

Seo an fear nár chosain a dheartháir é.  
[This is the man whom not did defend his brother him]  
'This is the man whose brother didn't defend him.'

IIa. When an IRP is paired with a Simple Preposition that has a Final Consonant, the Simple Preposition *directly precedes* the IRP.

### EXAMPLES OF THE IRP WITH A SIMPLE PREPOSITION WITH A FINAL CONSONANT:

Níor teach coitianta an teach as ar tháinig sí.  
[was not a house ordinary the house out of which came she]  
'The house out of which she came was no ordinary house.'

Cloiseann an cat ceol á sheinm istigh sa teach ina dtéann sé.  
[hears the cat music at its playing inside the house into which goes he]  
'The cat hears music being played inside the house into which he goes.'

Ní thuigfeadh an té ag a mbeadh a dhóthain an duine ar a mbeadh ocras.  
[not would understand the person at whom would be his fill the person on whom would be hunger]  
'The person who would have his fill would not understand the person who would be hungry.'

♥ The third example paraphrases a proverb, *ní thuigeann an sách an seang* 'the sated does not understand the starving'.

IIb. When an IRP is paired with a Simple Preposition that has a Final Vowel, the Simple Preposition *combines with* the IRP.

Simple Preposition	Simple Prep. + a <sup>E</sup>	Simple Prep. + ar <sup>L</sup>	Meaning of Either Combination
de 'of/off/from'	dá <sup>E</sup>	dar <sup>L</sup>	'of/off/from which' or 'of/off/from whom'
do 'to/for'	dá <sup>E</sup>	dar <sup>L</sup>	'to/for which' or 'to/for whom'
i 'in'	ina <sup>E</sup>	inar <sup>L</sup>	'in which' or 'in whom'
faoi 'under/about'	faoina <sup>E</sup>	faoinar <sup>L</sup>	'under/about which' or 'under/about whom'

Simple Preposition	Simple Prep. + a <sup>E</sup>	Simple Prep. + ar <sup>L</sup>	Meaning of Either Combination
ó 'of/from'	óna <sup>E</sup>	ónar <sup>L</sup>	'of/from which' or 'of/from whom'
le 'with/by'	lena <sup>E</sup>	lenar <sup>L</sup>	'with/by which' or 'with/by whom'
trí 'through'	trína <sup>E</sup>	trínar <sup>L</sup>	'through which' or 'through whom'

### EXAMPLES OF THE IRP COMBINED WITH A SIMPLE PREPOSITION:

Bhuail sé in éadan na seif dar thit na miasa.  
[knocked he against the shelf from which fell the dishes]  
'He knocked against the shelf from which the dishes fell.'

D'oibríodh sí sa siopa dá gceannaíteá earraí.  
[used to work she in the shop for which you used to buy merchandise]  
'She used to work in the shop for which you used to buy merchandise.'

An cuimhin libh an scioból ina n-imrímis?  
[is a memory by you the barn in which we used to play]  
'Do you remember the barn in which we used to play?'

Seo í an fheirm faoina bhfuarthas an uaimh.  
[is this the farm under which was found the cave]  
'This is the farm under which the cave was found.'

Cén t-ainm atá ar an gcathair óna bhfillfidh siad?  
[what is the name that is on the city from which will return they]  
'What is the name of the city from which they will return?'

Nár aithin tú an duine lenar labhair tú?  
[did not recognize you the person with whom you spoke]  
'Didn't you recognize the person with whom you spoke?'

Is geal na súile trína mbrisfeadh dúchas an chait.  
[are very bright the eyes through which would break nature of the cat]  
'The eyes through which the cat's nature would break are bright.'

III. When an IRP is paired with a Prepositional Pronoun, the Prepositional Pronoun *must* match the gender and number of the IRP's antecedent. The Prepositional Pronoun appears *after* the IRP and frequently at the end of the entire clause.

### EXAMPLES OF THE IRP WITH A PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN:

Bhuail sé in éadan na seif ar thit na miasa di.  
[knocked he against the shelf which fell the dishes from her]  
'He knocked against the shelf from which the dishes fell.'



D'oibríodh sí sa siopa a gceannaíteá earraí dó.  
 [used to work she in the shop which you used to buy merchandise for it]  
 'She used to work in the shop for which you used to buy merchandise.'

An cuimhin libh an scioból a n-imrímis ann?  
 [is a memory by you the barn which we used to play in him]  
 'Do you remember the barn in which we used to play?'

Seo í an fheirm a bhfuarthas an uaimh fúithi.  
 [is this the farm which was found the cave under her]  
 'This is the farm under which the cave was found.'

Cén t-ainm atá ar an gcathair a bhfillfidh siad uaithi?  
 [what is the name that is on the city which will return they from her]  
 'What is the name of the city from which they will return?'

Nár aithin tú an duine ar labhair tú leis?  
 [did not recognize you the person whom you spoke with him]  
 'Didn't you recognize the person with whom you spoke?'

Is geal na súile a mbrisfeadh dúchas an chait tríothu.  
 [are bright the eyes which would break nature of the cat through them]  
 'The eyes through which the cat's nature would break are very bright.'

Note: The constructions explained in IIA-B and III are interchangeable and equally common.

There is no need for an IRP when the Copula is the verb in an Indirect Relative Clause because **the Copula has special indirect-relative forms**. The present-tense indirect relative forms of the Copula mean 'which/whom is' or 'which/whom are', and the past/conditional indirect relative forms of the Copula mean 'which/whom were' or 'which/whom would be'.

**The Indirect Relative Copula is always paired with:**

- 1) a Possessive Adjective,
- 2) a Simple Preposition, or
- 3) a Prepositional Pronoun that completes the meaning of the Indirect Relative Copula and specifies the nature of the indirect-relative relationship (e.g. 'of which is', 'for whom was').

The indirect-relative forms of the Copula are:

	Present Tense	Present Tense before Vowel	Past or Conditional	P/C before Vowel or 'fh + Vowel'
Indirect Relative	ar	arb	ar <sup>L</sup>	arbh <sup>L</sup>
Neg. Ind. Relative	nach	nach	nár <sup>L</sup>	nárbh <sup>L</sup>

I. When an indirect-relative form of the Copula is paired with a Possessive Adjective, the Possessive Adjective follows the predicate because the predicate is the first word after the Copula.

### EXAMPLES OF INDIRECT-RELATIVE FORMS OF THE COPULA WITH POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES:

Chualamar an scéal sin ón mbuachaill arb iascaire a athair.  
 [heard we that story from the boy whom is a fisherman his father]  
 'We heard that story from the boy whose father is a fisherman.'

Inis é don chailín nach maighdean mhara a máthair!  
 [tell it to the girl whom is not a maiden of the sea her mother]  
 'Tell it to the girl whose mother isn't a mermaid!'

II. When an indirect-relative form of the Copula is paired with a Simple Preposition that has a final vowel, the Simple Preposition *may* combine with the Copula (see also *The Copula: Combined Forms*).

Simple Prep.	Simple Prep. + a	Simple Prep. + arb	Simple Prep. + a <sup>L</sup>	Simple Prep. + arbh <sup>L</sup>
do 'to, for'	dar	darb	dar <sup>L</sup>	darbh <sup>L</sup>
de 'of, off, from'	dar	darb	dar <sup>L</sup>	darbh <sup>L</sup>
le 'with, by'	lenar	lenarb	lenar <sup>L</sup>	lenarbh <sup>L</sup>
i 'in'	inar	inarb	inar <sup>L</sup>	inarbh <sup>L</sup>
ó 'of, from'	ónar	ónarb	ónar <sup>L</sup>	ónarbh <sup>L</sup>
faoi 'under'	faoinar	faoinarb	faoinar <sup>L</sup>	faoinarbh <sup>L</sup>
trí 'through'	trínar	trínarb	trínar <sup>L</sup>	trínarbh <sup>L</sup>

### EXAMPLES OF INDIRECT-RELATIVE FORMS OF THE COPULA COMBINED WITH SIMPLE PREPOSITIONS:

Is é an príomhcharachtar bean darb ainm Caitriona Pháidín.  
 [is the main character a woman to whom is a name Caitriona Pháidín]  
 'The main character is a woman whose name is Caitriona Pháidín.'

Arb é Áit an Phuint an áit inarbh fhearr le Caitriona bheith curtha?  
 [is Place of the Pound the place in which would be better with Caitriona to be buried]  
 'Is the Pound Plot the place in which Caitriona would prefer to be buried?'

♥ The examples in II. and III. refer to characters in Máirtín Ó Cadhain's *Cré na Cille* (Baile Átha Cliath: Sáirséal agus Dill, 1949). The Pound Plot is the graveyard in which each space for burial cost an Irish pound, convincing Caitriona that the Pound Plot is a classier resting-place than the cheaper Fifteen-Shilling Plot.

III. When an indirect relative form of the Copula is paired with a Prepositional Pronoun, the Prepositional Pronoun *must* match the gender and number of the Copula's antecedent, and the Prepositional Pronoun follows the predicate, because the predicate is the first word after the Copula.

### EXAMPLES OF INDIRECT-RELATIVE FORMS OF THE COPULA WITH PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUNS:

Is é an príomhcharachtar bean arb ainm di Caitriona Pháidín.  
[is the main character a woman whom is a name to her Caitriona Pháidín]  
'The main character is a woman whose name is Caitriona Pháidín.'

Arbh í Caitriona an deirfiúr arbh fhuath léi Neil?  
[was Caitriona the sister whom was a hatred by her Neil]  
'Was Caitriona the sister who hated Neil?'

Note: The constructions explained in IIA-B and III are interchangeable in meaning, but III is far commoner in spoken Irish.

## Dependent Clauses: 'If' and 'If Not'

A question, answer, or statement that uses 'if' or 'if not' normally consists of two clauses:

- 1) a **Dependent Clause that sets forth a condition**, e.g. *má tá an naíonán thuas i mbarr crainn* 'if the baby is up in a treetop'
- 2) a **Main Clause that sets forth an observation about, a consequence of, or a response to that condition**, e.g. *tá sé i gcontúirt titim* 'he is in danger of falling', *beidh eagla air nuair a dhúisíonn sé* 'he will be afraid when he awakes', *tabhair anuas ar an toirt é!* 'bring him down at once!'

Since the condition described in the Dependent Clause is the cause of the observation, consequence, or response described in the Main Clause, **the tense and mood of the verb in the Dependent Clause cannot imply a later time of occurrence than the tense and mood of the verb in the Main Clause.**<sup>18</sup>

### I. 'IF': MÁ<sup>L</sup> AND DÁ<sup>E</sup>

Irish has two words for 'if', *má<sup>L</sup>* and *dá<sup>E</sup>*. They imply different degrees of probability, possibility, and doubt on behalf of the speaker/writer, so they are *not* interchangeable.

What follows *má<sup>L</sup>* is probable, possible, or believed to be true by the speaker/writer, e.g. *má bhriseann an chraobh, titfidh an cliabhán* 'if the branch breaks, the cradle will fall'.

*Má<sup>L</sup>* is also used when 'if' is equivalent to 'whenever', e.g. *má shéideann an ghaoth, luascann an cliabhán* 'if/whenever the wind blows, the cradle rocks'.

*Má<sup>L</sup>* is followed by a verb in the indicative mood. The verb in the Main Clause can be in the indicative mood, the imperative mood, or the present subjunctive.

### EXAMPLES OF DEPENDENT CLAUSES WITH *má<sup>L</sup>*:

*Má bhuaileann tú leis an nGarda Fox, abair leis gur goideadh do lampa rothair ort.*  
'If you encounter Policeman Fox, tell him that your bicycle-lamp was stolen.'

Present Tense in Dependent Clause, Imperative Mood in Main Clause

*Má ghlacann sibh mo chomhairle, rachaidh sibh go dtí an Stáisiún Gardaí is gaire dúinn.*

'If you take my advice, you will go to the nearest Police Station.'

Present Tense in Dependent Clause, Future Tense in Main Clause

*Má bhíonn a bhosca airgid ag Philip Mathers amárach, beidh sé san airdeall ar ghadaithe.*

'If Philip Mathers has his cashbox tomorrow, he will be on the alert for thieves.'

Present Habitual in Dependent Clause,<sup>19</sup> Future Tense in Main Clause

*Má léinn *de Selby*, ní thuiginn leath dar scríobh sé.*

'If I used to read *de Selby*, I used not understand half of what he wrote.'

Imperfect Tense in Dependent Clause and in Main Clause

♥ The examples in this subsection refer to Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman* (1967; London: Paladin, 1989).

What follows *dá<sup>E</sup>* is improbable, impossible, or known to be false by the speaker/writer, e.g. *dá mbeadh ciall ag máthair an naíonáin, ní fhágfadh sí thuas sa chrann é* 'if the baby's mother had sense, she would not leave him up in the tree.'

*Dá<sup>E</sup>* can be followed by a verb in the conditional mood or the past subjunctive.<sup>20</sup> The verb in the Main Clause *must* be in the conditional mood.

### EXAMPLES OF DEPENDENT CLAUSES WITH *dá<sup>E</sup>*:

*Dá mbeadh an fear sin neamhchiontach, ní bheadh sé i bpríosún. or Dá mbíodh an fear sin neamhchiontach, ní bheadh sé i bpríosún.*  
'If that man were innocent, he would not be in prison.'

Conditional Mood in Dependent Clause and in Main Clause *or*  
Past Subjunctive in Dependent Clause, Conditional Mood in Main Clause

*Dá gcuirfi an cillín faoi ghlas, ní éalódh an príosúnach. or*

*Dá gcuirtí an cillín faoi ghlas, ní éalódh an príosúnach.*

'If the cell had been locked, the prisoner would not have escaped.'

Conditional Mood in Dependent Clause and in Main Clause *or*

Past Subjunctive in Dependent Clause, Conditional Mood in Main Clause

### II. 'IF NOT': MURÁ<sup>E</sup> AND MURAR<sup>L</sup>

*Murá<sup>E</sup>* 'if not' is the negative of *má<sup>L</sup>* and *dá<sup>E</sup>* and can be followed by a verb in the conditional, the past subjunctive, or any tense in the indicative mood *except* the past. The verb in the Main Clause can be in any tense or mood *except* the past.

### EXAMPLES OF DEPENDENT CLAUSES WITH *mura<sup>E</sup>*:

Mura n-itheann sé a chuid praisí, ní thabharfar bainne dó.  
'If he doesn't eat his porridge, he will not be given milk.'

Present Tense in Dependent Clause, Future Tense in Main Clause

Mura dtabharfaidh tú do shloinne, tabhair d'ainm baiste.  
'If you will not give your surname, give your first name.'

Future Tense in Dependent Clause, Imperative Mood in Main Clause

Mura gcreideadh sé i nDia, creideann sé anois Ann, agus sa Diabhal freisin.

'If he used not to believe in God, he believes in Him now, and in the Devil too.'

Imperfect Tense in Dependent Clause, Present Tense in Main Clause

Mura n-éistfeadh an Garda Fox leis an nGarda MacCruiskeen, ní rachadh sé as a mheabhair. *or*

Mura n-éistíodh an Garda Fox leis an nGarda MacCruiskeen, ní rachadh sé as a mheabhair.

'If Policeman Fox had not listened to Policeman MacCruiskeen, he would not have gone out of his mind.'

Conditional Mood in Dependent Clause and in Main Clause *or*

Past Subjunctive in Dependent Clause, Conditional Mood in Main Clause

***Murar<sup>L</sup>* 'if not' can be followed by the past tense *only* and so is the past-tense negative of *má<sup>L</sup>* only; *dá<sup>E</sup>* cannot be followed by the past tense. The verb of the Main Clause can be in any tense or mood.**

### EXAMPLES OF DEPENDENT CLAUSES WITH *murar<sup>L</sup>*:

Murar aithin tú é, breathnaigh arís ar a aghaidh.  
'If you didn't recognize him, look again at his face.'

Past Tense in Dependent Clause, Imperative Mood in Main Clause

Murar tháinig siad ar rothair, is dócha gur shiúil siad.

'If they didn't come on bicycles, it's likely that they walked.'

Past Tense in Dependent Clause, Present Tense in Main Clause

Murar léigh sibh na fonótaí, níor léigh sibh an chuid is fearr den leabhar.

'If you didn't read the footnotes, you didn't read the best part of the book.'

Past Tense in Dependent Clause and in Main Clause

### III. 'MÁ<sup>L</sup>, MURA<sup>E</sup>, MURAR<sup>L</sup> AND DÁ<sup>E</sup>+ COPULA'

***Má<sup>L</sup>*, *mura<sup>E</sup>*, and *murar<sup>L</sup>* combine with some forms of the Copula (see *The Copula: Combined Forms*), but *dá<sup>E</sup>* does not. The Dependent Clause can be *only* in the present or the past/conditional because the Copula has no other tenses or moods. The Main Clause can be in any tense or mood consistent with the rules given in I. and II. above.**

### EXAMPLES OF DEPENDENT CLAUSES WITH THE COPULA:

Más féidir leat, abair liom cad atá istigh sa bhosca seo.  
'If you can, tell me what is in this box.'

Present-Tense Copula in Dependent Clause, Imperative Mood in Main Clause

Murar maith leis, ní íosfaidh sé é.

'If he doesn't want to, he won't eat it.'

Present-Tense Copula in Dependent Clause, Future Tense in Main Clause

Má ba chóir dom an cheist a chur ort, ba chóir duit freagra a thabhairt orm.

'If it was proper for me to ask you the question, it was proper for you to give me an answer.'

Past-Tense Copula in Dependent Clause, Past Tense in Main Clause

Murarbh fhéidir liom an bosca is lú a fheiceáil, bhí mé cinnte go raibh sé ann mar sin féin.

'If I couldn't see the smallest box, I knew it was there nevertheless.'

Past-Tense Copula in Dependent Clause, Present Tense in Main Clause

Dá mb'fhearr leis an Sáirsint *The Dolly Mixture*, ní cheannódh sé *The Carnival Assorted*.

'If the Sergeant had preferred *The Dolly Mixture*, he would not have bought *The Carnival Assorted*.'

Conditional Mood Copula in Dependent Clause and Main Clause.

# Syntax

For most learners, idiomatic syntax – word-order that is natural to fluent speakers of a language – ties with correct pronunciation as the most difficult skill to develop. The only road to the palace of proficiency is paved with reading and listening to a lot of exemplary Modern Irish, be it in the form of fiction, folklore, or scholarly writing (see *Tools* for recommendations).

Dialect, emphasis, and style shape syntax in Irish to the same degree that they shape syntax in any language: where there are two or more proper ways to express an idea, a speaker's/writer's personal preferences prevail. The more complex the sentence, the more numerous the options and the more individual taste determines syntax. But basic expressions obey rules of word-order that are seldom or never broken. Below is the syntax of short questions, answers, and statements based on any verb *except* the Copula (for the syntax of Copula constructions, see *The Copula*).

Parentheses enclose an item or items that are interchangeable in the same formula, e.g. the combination (Simple Preposition + Indirect Object) and the single word (Prepositional Pronoun) may be substituted for each other in the constructions described in VI. and VII. below.

## IA. 'VERB'

**A command may consist simply of a verb in the imperative mood** because the subject is implied in the verb-form.

**A statement may consist simply of a verb in the conditional mood or the imperfect tense** because the subject is conveyed by the personal ending of the synthetic form (see *Verbs: Person, Number, Tense, Mood ~Analytic Forms vs. Synthetic Forms*).

**An affirmative answer may consist simply of the same verb that begins the question** whether the verb-form is synthetic or analytic.

### EXAMPLES OF 'VERB':

Ólaigí! 'Drink!'	Command with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> p. pl. Imperative
D'imrímis. 'We used to play.'	Statement in the Imperfect Tense
Chonaic. 'I did see.'	Affirmative Answer to <i>An/Nach bhfaca tú?</i> 'Did/Didn't you see?'

## IB. 'PREVERBAL PARTICLE + VERB'

**A command, a statement, or an answer** that fulfils the conditions in IA. **may consist simply of a negative or an interrogative Preverbal Particle** (see *Preverbal Particles*) **followed by a verb**. In fact a Preverbal Particle may precede the Verb in any of the following formulae.

### EXAMPLES OF 'PREVERBAL PARTICLE + VERB':

Ná hólaigí! 'Don't drink!'	Negative Command with the 2 <sup>nd</sup> p. pl. Imperative
An imrímis? 'Used we to play?'	Interrogative with the Imperfect Tense
Ní fhaca. 'I didn't see.'	Negative Answer to <i>An/Nach bhfaca tú?</i> 'Did/Didn't you see?'

## IIA. 'VERB + SUBJECT'

An Analytic Verb (see *Verbs: Analytic vs. Synthetic*) is followed by a Subject that is a pronoun or a noun, and **the Subject may be as simple as one word or as complex as a entire clause**.

### EXAMPLES OF 'VERB + SUBJECT':

Ólann tú. 'You drink.'	
D'imríodh na leanaí sin. 'Those children used to play.'	
Tabharfaidh ár gcomharsa a bhfuil gluaisteán aici síob dúinn. 'Our neighbor who has a car will give us a lift.'	

## IIB. 'AUTONOMOUS VERB-FORM + DIRECT OBJECT'

An Autonomous Verb (see *Verbs: Person, Number, Tense, Mood*) can be followed by an object that is a pronoun or a noun. Like the Subject in IIA., **the Direct Object in IIB. may be as simple as one word or as complex as an entire clause**. It goes without saying but nevertheless it will be said that 'Autonomous Form + Direct Object' may replace 'Verb + Subject' in any of the following formulae.

### EXAMPLES OF 'AUTONOMOUS VERB-FORM + DIRECT OBJECT':

Óltar é. 'It is drunk.'	
D'imrití an cluiche sin. 'That game used to be played.'	
Feicfear dreigi a thitfidh anuas as an spéir. 'Meteors that will fall from the sky will be seen.'	

## IIIA. 'VERB + SUBJECT + DIRECT OBJECT'

When a verb is transitive the action performed by the Subject is inflicted on the Direct Object, and **both the Verb and the Subject precede the Direct Object**.

#### EXAMPLES OF 'VERB + SUBJECT + DIRECT OBJECT':

An ólfaidh tú cupán tae le bainne agus siúcra?  
'Will you drink a cup of tea with milk and sugar?'

Ní imreodh na leanaí sin peil.  
'Those children would not play soccer.'

D'fheiceadh ár gcairde ceathanna dreigí.  
'Our friends used to see meteor showers.'

#### IV. 'VERB + SUBJECT + (DIRECT OBJECT + ADVERB)' OR 'VERB + SUBJECT + (ADVERB + DIRECT OBJECT)'

In sentences consisting of only these four items **the Adverb may precede the Direct Object, especially in common expressions.**

#### EXAMPLES OF 'VERB + SUBJECT + DIRECT OBJECT + ADVERB':

Nach n-imríonn na leanaí sin peil go maith?  
'Don't those children play soccer well?'

An dtabharfá do dheirfiúr Mira abhaile?  
'Would you bring your sister Mira home?'

Dhéanaidís cuairteanna istoíche.  
'They used to visit at night.'

#### EXAMPLES OF 'VERB + SUBJECT + ADVERB + DIRECT OBJECT':

An bhfeicfidimid arís sibh?  
'Will we see you again?'

Tabhair isteach do bhréagáin, a Hannah.  
'Bring in your toys, Hannah.'

#### V. 'VERB + SUBJECT + (SIMPLE PREPOSITION + INDIRECT OBJECT)' OR 'VERB + SUBJECT + (PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN)'

When the meaning of a Verb is completed by a Simple Preposition, the Preposition follows the Subject or the synthetic verb-form.

#### EXAMPLES OF 'VERB + SUBJECT + SIMPLE PREPOSITION + INDIRECT OBJECT':

D'éistidís lena n-athair.  
'They used to listen to their father.'

Ar imigh Eibhlín leis an eochair?  
'Did Eibhlín go off with the key?'

Nach n-éireoidh Pam as a post?  
'Won't Pam quit her job?'

#### EXAMPLES OF 'VERB + SUBJECT + PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN':

D'éistidís leis.  
'They used to listen to him.'

Ar imigh Eibhlín léi?  
'Did Eibhlín go off with herself?'

Nach n-éireoidh Pam as?  
'Won't Pam quit it?'

#### VI. 'VERB + SUBJECT + DIRECT OBJECT + (SIMPLE PREPOSITION + INDIRECT OBJECT)' OR 'VERB + SUBJECT + (PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN) + DIRECT OBJECT'

Sometimes a construction includes both an Indirect Object and a Direct Object. **It is never incorrect for the Direct Object to precede the Indirect Object, but as in IV., in common expressions the Direct Object often follows the Indirect Object.**

#### EXAMPLES OF 'VERB + SUBJECT + DIRECT OBJECT + SIMPLE PREPOSITION + INDIRECT OBJECT':

An leagfaidh an ghaoth an t-úll mór dearg sin den chrann?  
'Will the wind knock that big red apple off the tree?'

Mholfainn a shaothar nua do Thríona agus Nollaig.  
'I would recommend his new work to Tríona and Nollaig.'

Nár chuir tú an litir a scríobh d'iníon chuig a seanmháthair?  
'Didn't you send the letter that your daughter wrote to her grandmother?'

#### EXAMPLES OF 'VERB + SUBJECT + PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN + DIRECT OBJECT':

Inis dúinn an scéala a chuala sibh aréir.  
'Tell us the news that you heard last night.'

Nach ligfidh tú di labhairt?  
'Won't you allow her to speak?'

Chuir Julia uirthi a cóta nua sular imigh sí.  
'Julia put on her new coat before she departed.'

#### VII. 'VERB + SUBJECT + (PREPOSITION + INDIRECT OBJECT) + (PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN)' OR 'VERB + SUBJECT + (PREPOSITIONAL PRONOUN) + (PREPOSITION + INDIRECT OBJECT)'

Many idioms consist of a Verb plus two different Prepositions. In some cases the Verb and the Subject describe a condition experienced by the Indirect Object of the first Preposition and induced by the Indirect Object of the Second Preposition. In others it is the Verb and the first Preposition that describe a condition experienced by the Indirect Object of the second Preposition. Either way, **because each Preposition supplies a different part of the idiom, the Prepositions always occur in the same order.**



### EXAMPLES OF IDIOMS OF A VERB WITH TWO PREPOSITIONS:

Nach mbíodh grá ag Fand do Chúchulain fadó?  
[did not used to be love at Fand for Cúchulain long ago]  
'Didn't Fand used to love Cúchulain long ago?'  
Idiom: 'bí + grá + ag + do'

Bhí eagla ar Fand roimh Emer, bean Chúchulain.  
[fear was on Fand before Emer, wife of Cúchulain]  
'Fand was afraid of Emer, Cúchulain's wife.'  
Idiom: 'bí + eagla + ar + roimh'

Chuirfeadh gol na mban as do Chúchulain.  
[would put weeping of the women out to Cúchulain]  
'The women's weeping would disconcert Cúchulain.'  
Idiom: 'cuir + as + do'

♥ These examples refer to *Serglige Con Culaind*, an early Irish tale about Cúchulain's otherworldly philandering. You can find it in Gantz (1984: 153-78)

### VIII. DIRECT OBJECTS AND ADVERBS AS END-WORDS

The words that are most easily pushed to the end of an expression are **Direct Objects, and Adverbs that are not qualifying other words.**<sup>21</sup> If a sentence contains both items, one is as likely as the other to appear at the end, although a Direct Object that is a Pronoun usually edges out an Adverb for last place.

#### EXAMPLES OF DIRECT OBJECTS AND ADVERBS AS END-WORDS:

Deir an t-iascaire go n-úsáidfidh sé an ortha ar an toirt.  
'The fisherman says that he will use the charm at once.'

Deir an t-iascaire go n-úsáidfidh sé ar an toirt í.  
'The fisherman says that he will use it at once.'

Ní fhacamar an t-iora rua a bhailigh na cnónna go mear.  
'We didn't see the red squirrel that gathered the nuts quickly.'

Ní fhacamar an t-iora rua a bhailigh go mear iad.  
'We didn't see the red squirrel that quickly gathered them.'

For more on syntax, see *Preverbal Particles, Interrogatives, The Copula: 'What Is It?~'Which is it?~'Emphasis-Idioms with 'le' and 'do', The Verbal Noun: Functions, Adjectives: Predicative vs. Attributive, Prepositions: Functions and Types, Dependent Clauses, Lookalikes*.

# Numbers

## Types

There are three types of numbers: **Cardinal, Personal, and Ordinal.**

**Cardinal Numbers** are used to name figures (e.g. telephone numbers, numbers on playing cards, mathematical numbers other than fractions) and to count units (e.g. time, measurement, rhythm) and objects (e.g. shirts, reptiles, mangoes).

**Personal Numbers** must be used to designate human beings. They can also designate animals or things, especially in Ulster Irish (e.g. *beirt fhear* 'two men', *beirt chat* 'two cats', *beirt deochanna* 'two drinks').

**Ordinal Numbers** are used to rank objects (e.g. *an chéad lá* 'the first day', *an dara leathanach* 'the second page', *an tríú fear* 'the third man') and to denote fractions (e.g. *tríú* or *trian* '1/3', *ceathrú* '1/4', *cúigiú* '1/5').

Note: All systems of counting distinguish Cardinals, Personals, and Ordinals as described above. Alternatives to the *Caighdeán* involve different vocabulary, e.g. the Personal Numbers *dís* 'two people' and *mórsheisear* 'seven people', and different construction of the Cardinal Numbers 20 and above, e.g. *scór* 'twenty', *aon ar fhichid* '21', *deich fichead* '30', *deich is daichead* '50', *deich is trí fichid* '70' (cf. French, which likewise builds higher multiples of ten on *vingt* '20').

## Numbers: Cardinal

A **Cardinal Number can be an Indefinite Noun** (e.g. *an bhfuil dó i d'uimhir theileafóin?* 'is there a two in your telephone number?') or a **Definite Noun** (e.g. *an sé muileata* 'the six of diamonds').

The singular definite article is used for *aon, dá, and multiples of ten beginning with 20* (e.g. *an dá theach* 'the two houses', *an tríocha pláta* 'the 30 plates'). The plural definite article is used for **3-19 unless these numbers are paired with céad, míle, or milliún**, whose claim to the singular definite article takes precedence (e.g. *na cúig dhíochlaonadh* 'the five declensions', *na sé choinneal déag* 'the 16 candles', but *an ceithre chéad míle* 'the 400 miles', *an sé mhíle focal* 'the 6,000 words').

In idioms, **Cardinal Numbers can be paired with simple prepositions** (e.g. *abair é faoi thrí* 'say it three times').

The rules of lenition and eclipsis for **Cardinal Numbers 1-9 apply to all higher numbers of which 1-9 are a part**. In other words, *naoi* '9' eclipses a following noun not only as 9 but also as 19, 29, etc. (e.g. *naoi ngadhar* '9 dogs', *naoi ngadhar déag* '19 dogs', *naoi ngadhar is fiche* '29 dogs'). The same is true of rules governing attributive adjectives after **1-9 nouns** (e.g.

naoi ngadhar *bhreaca* ‘9 spotted dogs’, *naoi ngadhar déag bhreaca* ‘19 spotted dogs’, *naoi ngadhar bhreaca is fiche* ‘29 spotted dogs’).

The rules for using Cardinal Numbers depend on what you are using them for and which numbers you are using.

For an explanation of lenition and eclipsis in the following charts, see *Nouns: Mutations* and *Adjectives: Mutations*.

## I. CARDINAL NUMBERS FOR IMMATERIAL UNITS

Cardinal Numbers are preceded by the particle *a<sup>h</sup>* in:

- a) **counting aloud**, e.g. *a haon, a dó, a trí, anois!* ‘one, two, three, now!’
- b) **providing numerical information**, e.g. *is é uimhir an chuntais a sé, a dó, a ceathair, a seacht, a naoi, a haon, a náid* ‘the account number is 6247910’
- c) **telling time**, e.g. *ar<sup>22</sup> a haon déag a chlog* ‘at eleven o’clock’
- d) **addition, subtraction, multiplication, division**, e.g. *a ceathair is a hocht sin a dó dhéag* ‘four plus eight is twelve’, *a ceathair óna dó dhéag sin a hocht* ‘four from twelve is eight’, *a trí faoina trí sin a naoi* ‘three times three is nine’, *a naoi ar a trí sin a trí* ‘nine divided by three is three’
- e) **specifying a bus, train, flight, etc.**, e.g. *Ardán a naoi*.
- f) **giving a title** (e.g. *Liam a Dó* ‘William the Second’).

0	náid		
1	aon	11	aon déag
2	dó	12	dó dhéag
3	trí	13	trí déag
4	ceathair	14	ceathair déag
5	cúig	15	cúig déag
6	sé	16	sé déag
7	seacht	17	seacht déag
8	ocht	18	ocht déag
9	naoi	19	naoi déag
10	deich	20	fiche
21	fiche a haon	31	tríocha a haon
22	fiche a dó	32	tríocha a dó
23	fiche a trí	33	tríocha a trí
24	fiche a ceathair	34	tríocha a ceathair
25	fiche a cúig	35	tríocha a cúig
26	fiche a sé	36	tríocha a sé
27	fiche a seacht	37	tríocha a seacht
28	fiche a hocht	38	tríocha a hocht
29	fiche a naoi	39	tríocha a naoi
30	tríocha	40	daichead
50	caoga		
60	seasca		
70	seachtó		

80	ochtó
90	nócha
100	céad
103	céad a trí
117	céad a seacht déag
150	céad a caoga <i>or</i> céad go leith [one hundred and a half]
1,000	míle
1,010	míle a deich
2,300	dhá mhíle, trí chéad
5,875	cúig mhíle, ocht gcéad seachtó a cúig
100,000	céad míle
1,000,000	milliún
6,400,003	sé mhilliún, ceithre chéad míle, a trí
9,999,999	naoi milliún, naoi gcéad nócha a naoi míle, naoi gcéad nócha a naoi

## II. CARDINAL NUMBERS FOR MATERIAL OBJECTS

When counting objects, the Cardinal Numbers *dó* ‘two’ and *ceathair* ‘four’ become *dhá* and *ceithre* (e.g. *dhá ghluaisteán* ‘two cars’, *ceithre chos* ‘four legs’).

*Dhá* takes the dual case<sup>23</sup> of *bos* ‘palm of hand’, *cos* ‘foot’, *cluas* ‘ear’, *lámh* ‘hand’, and *bróg* ‘boot’, yielding *dhá bhois* ‘two palms’, *dhá chois* ‘two feet’, *dhá chluas* ‘two ears’, *dhá lámh* ‘two hands’, *dhá bhróig* ‘two shoes’.

Cardinal Numbers **1-6 lenite** a following noun, **7-10 eclipse** a following noun, and **multiples of ten beginning with 20 cause no mutation**.

A few commonly counted nouns have special forms that are used *only* with Cardinal Numbers (see III.-V. below).

The Cardinal Numbers **two and higher except multiples of ten beginning with 20 require adjectives to be plural and lenited**.

1 small white cat	aon chat beag bán
2 small white cats	dhá chat bheaga bhána
3 small white cats	trí chat bheaga bhána
4 small white cats	ceithre chat bheaga bhána
5 small white cats	cúig chat bheaga bhána
6 small white cats	sé chat bheaga bhána
7 small white cats	seacht gcat bheaga bhána
8 small white cats	ocht gcat bheaga bhána
9 small white cats	naoi gcat bheaga bhána
10 small white cats	deich gcat bheaga bhána
11 small white cats	aon chat déag beag bán
12 small white cats	dhá chat déag bheaga bhána
13 small white cats	trí chat déag bheaga bhána
14 small white cats	ceithre chat déag bheaga bhána
15 small white cats	cúig chat déag bheaga bhána
16 small white cats	sé chat déag bheaga bhána
17 small white cats	seacht gcat déag bheaga bhána
18 small white cats	ocht gcat déag bheaga bhána

19 small white cats	naoi gcat déag bheaga bhána
20 small white cats	fiche cat beag bán
21 small white cats	cat beag bán is fiche
22 small white cats	dhá chat bheaga bhána is fiche
23 small white cats	trí chat bheaga bhána is fiche
24 small white cats	ceithre chat bheaga bhána is fiche
25 small white cats	cúig chat bheaga bhána is fiche
26 small white cats	sé chat bheaga bhána is fiche
27 small white cats	seacht gcat bheaga bhána is fiche
28 small white cats	ocht gcat bheaga bhána is fiche
29 small white cats	naoi gcat bheaga bhána is fiche
30 small white cats	tríocha cat beag bán
100 small white cats	céad cat beag bán
101 small white cats	céad is aon chat beag bán
114 small white cats	céad is ceithre chat déag bheaga bhána
1,000 small white cats	míle cat beag bán
4,321 small white cats	ceithre mhíle, trí chéad, aon chat beag bán is fiche
1,000,000 small white cats	milliún cat beag bán
2,584,950 small white cats	dhá mhilliún, cúig chéad ochtó a ceathair míle, naoi gcéad is caoga cat beag bán

### III. CARDINAL NUMBERS FOR COUNTING YEARS

The singular form *bliain* follows *aon, dhá, and multiples of ten beginning with 20*.

The special plural form *bliana* follows 3-10.

The rules of lenition for 3-6 *do not apply* because *bliana* is a plural noun, but the rules of eclipsis for 7-10 *do*. To specify 'years of age', simply add *d'aois* 'of age' after *bliain* or *bliana*.

1 year	bliain	11 years	aon bhliain déag
2 years	dhá bhliain	12 years	dhá bhliain déag
3 years	trí bliana	13 years	trí bliana déag
4 years	ceithre bliana	14 years	ceithre bliana déag
5 years	cúig bliana	15 years	cúig bliana déag
6 years	sé bliana	16 years	sé bliana déag
7 years	seacht mbliana	17 years	seacht mbliana déag
8 years	ocht mbliana	18 years	ocht mbliana déag
9 years	naoi mbliana	19 years	naoi mbliana déag
10 years	deich mbliana	20 years	fiche bliain
21 years	bliain is fiche		
22 years	dhá bhliain is fiche		
23 years	trí bliana is fiche		
24 years	ceithre bliana is fiche		
25 years	cúig bliana is fiche		
26 years	sé bliana is fiche		
27 years	seacht mbliana is fiche		
28 years	ocht mbliana is fiche		
29 years	naoi mbliana is fiche		

30 years	tríocha bliain
100 years	céad bliain
1,543 years	míle, cúig chéad trí bliana is daichead
800,126 years	ocht gcéad míle, céad fiche a sé bliana
7,853,452 years	seacht milliún, ocht gcéad caoga a trí míle, ceithre chéad caoga a dó bhliain

To name the years of a decade:

the 20's	na fichidí
the 50's	na caogaidí
the 90's	na nóchaidí

### IV. CARDINAL NUMBERS FOR COUNTING 'ONES'

*Ceann* is used when both the speaker/writer and the listener/reader know exactly what is being counted. The 'ones' in question must be non-human animals or material objects.

The singular form *ceann* follows *aon, dhá, and multiples of ten beginning with 20*.

The plural form *cinn* follows 3-10.

The rules of lenition *do not apply* for the numbers 3-6, because *cinn* is a plural noun, but the rules of eclipsis for 7-10 *do*.

1	ceann/ceann amháin/ aon cheann amháin	11	aon cheann déag
2	dhá cheann	12	dhá cheann déag
3	trí cinn	13	trí cinn déag
4	ceithre cinn	14	ceithre cinn déag
5	cúig cinn	15	cúig cinn déag
6	sé cinn	16	sé cinn déag
7	seacht gcinn	17	seacht gcinn déag
8	ocht gcinn	18	ocht gcinn déag
9	naoi gcinn	19	naoi gcinn déag
10	deich gcinn	20	fiche ceann
21	ceann is fiche		
22	dhá cheann is fiche		
23	trí cinn is fiche		
24	ceithre cinn is fiche		
25	cúig cinn is fiche		
26	sé cinn is fiche		
27	seacht gcinn is fiche		
28	ocht gcinn is fiche		
29	naoi gcinn is fiche		
30	tríocha ceann		

Note: When a noun is qualified by at least one adjective, its number is often designated by the formula 'X *ceann de* Y', where X = a Cardinal Number and Y = a plural noun plus any qualifiers, e.g. *seacht gcinn de chait bheaga bhána* '7 small white cats', *dhá cheann is fiche de chait bheaga bhána* '22 small white cats'.

## V. CARDINAL NUMBERS FOR COUNTING TIMES

The 'times' can be hours, repetitions, or occasions.

The singular form *uair* follows *aon* and multiples of ten beginning with 20.

The special plural form *uair* follows 3-10.

*Trí*, *ceithre*, and *sé* prefix 'h' to *uair* and the rules of eclipsis for 7-10 apply.

1 time	uair amháin	11 times	aon uair déag
2 times	dhá uair	12 times	dhá uair déag
3 times	trí <u>h</u> uaire	13 times	trí <u>h</u> uaire déag
4 times	ceithre <u>h</u> uaire	14 times	ceithre <u>h</u> uaire déag
5 times	cúig uaire	15 times	cúig uaire déag
6 times	sé <u>h</u> uaire	16 times	sé <u>h</u> uaire déag
7 times	seacht <u>n</u> -uaire	17 times	seacht <u>n</u> -uaire déag
8 times	ocht <u>n</u> -uaire	18 times	ocht <u>n</u> -uaire déag
9 times	naoi <u>n</u> -uaire	19 times	naoi <u>n</u> -uaire déag
10 times	deich <u>n</u> -uaire	20 times	fiche uair
21 times	uair is fiche		
22 times	dhá uair is fiche		
23 times	trí <u>h</u> uaire is fiche		
24 times	ceithre <u>h</u> uaire is fiche		
25 times	cúig uaire is fiche		
26 times	sé <u>h</u> uaire is fiche		
27 times	seacht <u>n</u> -uaire is fiche		
28 times	ocht <u>n</u> -uaire is fiche		
29 times	naoi <u>n</u> -uaire is fiche		
30 times	tríocha uair.		

Note: *Péire* 'a pair', *dosaen* 'a dozen', and *scór* '20' are followed by a noun in the **genitive plural**: *péire éan* 'a pair of birds', *dosaen rósanna* 'a dozen roses', *scór máithreacha súigh* '20 squid'. *Cúpla* 'a couple' is always followed by a noun in the **N/A singular**.

## Numbers: Ordinal

Ordinal Numbers have two uses: 1) to rank nouns 2) to designate fractions.

Nouns ranked by Ordinal Numbers are **always** definite and are preceded by either the definite article (e.g. *an dara cathaoir* 'the second chair') or a possessive adjective (e.g. *mo chéad ghluaisteán* 'my first car').

Fractions may stand alone or be followed by an indefinite or a definite noun. When they are followed by a noun, the noun is either in the **genitive singular** (e.g. *trí cheathrú uaire* '3/4 of an hour') or in the **dative singular** and preceded by *de* 'from' (e.g. *dhá thrian den bhainne* '2/3 of the milk').

The rules for using Ordinal Numbers depend on whether you are using them to rank items or to represent fractions.

For an explanation of lenition and eclipsis in the following charts, see **Nouns: Mutations**.

## IA. ORDINAL NUMBERS FOR 'ONES'

'Ones' refers to any item in a sequence.

There are special Ordinal Numbers for ranking first and second, *céad* and *dara*.

*Céad* 'first' lenites a following singular noun.

For ranking with higher numbers, add -ú or -iú to the Cardinal Numbers 3-20 and to the decades (see III. in *Numbers: Cardinal*) for multiples of ten beginning with 30. In order to add the suffix, it may be necessary to delete the final vowel, syncopate the final syllable, or broaden the final consonant of the Cardinal Number or the decade.

**ceann** 'one'

the 1 <sup>st</sup> one	an <u>ch</u> éad cheann	the 11 <sup>th</sup> one	an t-aonú ceann déag
the 2 <sup>nd</sup> one	an <u>d</u> ara ceann	the 12 <sup>th</sup> one	an dóú <sup>24</sup> ceann déag
the 3 <sup>rd</sup> one	an tríú ceann	the 13 <sup>th</sup> one	an tríú ceann déag
the 4 <sup>th</sup> one	an ceathrú ceann	the 14 <sup>th</sup> one	an ceathrú ceann déag
the 5 <sup>th</sup> one	an cúigiú ceann	the 15 <sup>th</sup> one	an cúigiú ceann déag
the 6 <sup>th</sup> one	an séú ceann	the 16 <sup>th</sup> one	an séú ceann déag
the 7 <sup>th</sup> one	an seachtú ceann	the 17 <sup>th</sup> one	an seachtú ceann déag
the 8 <sup>th</sup> one	an t-ochtú ceann	the 18 <sup>th</sup> one	an t-ochtú ceann déag
the 9 <sup>th</sup> one	an naoú ceann	the 19 <sup>th</sup> one	an naoú ceann déag
the 10 <sup>th</sup> one	an deichiú ceann	the 20 <sup>th</sup> one	an fichiú ceann
the 21 <sup>st</sup> one	an t-aonú ceann is fiche	the 40 <sup>th</sup> one	an daicheadú ceann
the 22 <sup>nd</sup> one	an dóú ceann is fiche	the 50 <sup>th</sup> one	an caogadú ceann
the 23 <sup>rd</sup> one	an tríú ceann is fiche	the 60 <sup>th</sup> one	an seascadú ceann
the 24 <sup>th</sup> one	an ceathrú ceann is fiche	the 70 <sup>th</sup> one	an seachtódú ceann
the 25 <sup>th</sup> one	an cúigiú ceann is fiche	the 80 <sup>th</sup> one	an t-ochtódú ceann
the 26 <sup>th</sup> one	an séú ceann is fiche	the 90 <sup>th</sup> one	an nóchadú ceann
the 27 <sup>th</sup> one	an seachtú ceann is fiche	the 100 <sup>th</sup> one	an céadú ceann
the 28 <sup>th</sup> one	an t-ochtú ceann is fiche	the 1,000 <sup>th</sup> one	an míliú ceann
the 29 <sup>th</sup> one	an naoú ceann is fiche	the 1,000,000 <sup>th</sup> one	an milliúnú ceann
the 30 <sup>th</sup> one	an tríochadú ceann		

## IB. ORDINAL NUMBERS FOR A MASCULINE NOUN WITH INITIAL 'F'

**fómhar flúirseach** 'an abundant harvest'

the 1 <sup>st</sup> abundant harvest	an <u>ch</u> éad <u>fh</u> ómhar flúirseach
the 2 <sup>nd</sup> abundant harvest	an dara fómhar flúirseach
the 3 <sup>rd</sup> abundant harvest	an tríú fómhar flúirseach
the 4 <sup>th</sup> abundant harvest	an ceathrú fómhar flúirseach
the 5 <sup>th</sup> abundant harvest	an cúigiú fómhar flúirseach
the 6 <sup>th</sup> abundant harvest	an séú fómhar flúirseach
the 7 <sup>th</sup> abundant harvest	an seachtú fómhar flúirseach
the 8 <sup>th</sup> abundant harvest	an t-ochtú fómhar flúirseach
the 9 <sup>th</sup> abundant harvest	an naoú fómhar flúirseach
the 10 <sup>th</sup> abundant harvest	an deichiú fómhar flúirseach
the 11 <sup>th</sup> abundant harvest	an t-aonú fómhar déag flúirseach
the 12 <sup>th</sup> abundant harvest	an dóú fómhar déag flúirseach



the 13<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 14<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 15<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 16<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 17<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 18<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 19<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 20<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 21<sup>st</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 22<sup>nd</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 23<sup>rd</sup> abundant harvest  
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 the 30<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 40<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 50<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 60<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 70<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 80<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 90<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 100<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 1,000<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest  
 the 1,000,000<sup>th</sup> abundant harvest

an tríú fómhar déag flúirseach  
 an ceathrú fómhar déag flúirseach  
 an cúigiú fómhar déag flúirseach  
 an séú fómhar déag flúirseach  
 an seachtú fómhar déag flúirseach  
 an t-ochtú fómhar déag flúirseach  
 an naoú fómhar déag flúirseach  
 an fichiú fómhar flúirseach  
 an t-aonú fómhar flúirseach is fiche  
 an dóú fómhar flúirseach is fiche  
 an tríú fómhar flúirseach is fiche  
 an ceathrú fómhar flúirseach is fiche  
 an cúigiú fómhar flúirseach is fiche  
 an séú fómhar flúirseach is fiche  
 an seachtú fómhar flúirseach is fiche  
 an ochtú fómhar flúirseach is fiche  
 an naoú fómhar flúirseach is fiche  
 an tríochadú fómhar flúirseach  
 an daicheadú fómhar flúirseach  
 an caogadú fómhar flúirseach  
 an seascadú fómhar flúirseach  
 an seachtódú fómhar flúirseach  
 an t-ochtódú fómhar flúirseach  
 an nóchadú fómhar flúirseach  
 an céadú fómhar flúirseach  
 an míliú fómhar flúirseach  
 an milliúnú fómhar flúirseach

### IC. ORDINAL NUMBERS FOR A FEMININE NOUN WITH AN INITIAL VOWEL

Ordinal Numbers other than *céad* prefix 'h' to a following noun with an initial vowel.

A singular noun with a final vowel *lenites déag*.

A feminine noun *lenites* an attributive adjective.

*oíche dhorcha* 'a dark night'

the 1<sup>st</sup> dark night  
 the 2<sup>nd</sup> dark night  
 the 3<sup>rd</sup> dark night  
 the 4<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 5<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 6<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 7<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 8<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 9<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 10<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 11<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 12<sup>th</sup> dark night

an chéad oíche dhorcha  
 an dara hoíche dhorcha  
 an tríú hoíche dhorcha  
 an ceathrú hoíche dhorcha  
 an cúigiú hoíche dhorcha  
 an séú hoíche dhorcha  
 an seachtú hoíche dhorcha  
 an t-ochtú hoíche dhorcha  
 an naoú hoíche dhorcha  
 an deichiú hoíche dhorcha  
 an t-aonú hoíche dhorcha déag  
 an dóú hoíche dhorcha déag

the 13<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 14<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 15<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 16<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 17<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 18<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 19<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 20<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 21<sup>st</sup> dark night  
 the 22<sup>nd</sup> dark night  
 the 23<sup>rd</sup> dark night  
 the 24<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 25<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 26<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 27<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 28<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 29<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 30<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 40<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 50<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 60<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 70<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 80<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 90<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 100<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 1,000<sup>th</sup> dark night  
 the 1,000,000<sup>th</sup> dark night

an tríú hoíche dhorcha déag  
 an ceathrú hoíche dhorcha déag  
 an cúigiú hoíche dhorcha déag  
 an séú hoíche dhorcha déag  
 an seachtú hoíche dhorcha déag  
 an t-ochtú hoíche dhorcha déag  
 an naoú hoíche dhorcha déag  
 an fichiú hoíche dhorcha  
 an t-aonú hoíche dhorcha is fiche  
 an dóú hoíche dhorcha is fiche  
 an tríú hoíche dhorcha is fiche  
 an ceathrú hoíche dhorcha is fiche  
 an cúigiú hoíche dhorcha is fiche  
 an séú hoíche dhorcha is fiche  
 an seachtú hoíche dhorcha is fiche  
 an ochtú hoíche dhorcha is fiche  
 an naoú hoíche dhorcha is fiche  
 an tríochadú hoíche dhorcha  
 an daicheadú hoíche dhorcha  
 an caogadú hoíche dhorcha  
 an seascadú hoíche dhorcha  
 an seachtódú hoíche dhorcha  
 an t-ochtódú hoíche dhorcha  
 an nóchadú hoíche dhorcha  
 an céadú hoíche dhorcha  
 an míliú hoíche dhorcha  
 an milliúnú hoíche dhorcha

### IIA. FRACTIONS WITHOUT A NOUN

There are special Ordinal Numbers for 1/2 and 1/3, *leath* and *trian*.

1/4-1/10 are identical to the Ordinal Numbers for ranking 4<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>.

1/11-1/19 combine the two parts of 11-19 (e.g. *aondéag* instead of *aon déag*) and add the suffix -ú to *déag* (e.g. *aondéagú* '1/11').

1/12-1/19 have strong plurals in -uithe.

*De* 'of' follows *déag* when *déag* is part of the numerator (i.e. the first or top number) of a fraction whose denominator (i.e. the second or bottom number) is smaller than 11.

1/2	<u>leath</u>	1/9	naoú
		2/9	dhá naoú
1/3	<u>trian</u>	4/9	ceithre naoú
2/3	dhá <u>thrian</u>	5/9	cúig naoú
		7/9	seacht naoú
1/4	ceathrú	8/9	ocht naoú
3/4	trí cheathrú		
1/5	cúigiú	1/10	deichiú



2/5	dhá chúigiú	1/11	aondéagú
3/5	trí chúigiú	2/11	dhá aondéagú
4/5	ceithre chúigiú	3/11	trí aondéagú
1/6	séú	1/12	dódhéagú
		5/12	cúig dhódhéagú
1/7	seachtú	1/13	trídéagú
2/7	dhá sheachtú	12/13	a dó dhéag de thrídéaguithe
3/7	trí sheachtú	1/20	fichiú
4/7	ceithre sheachtú	19/20	a naoi déag d'fhichithe
5/7	cúig sheachtú		
6/7	sé sheachtú		
1/8	ochtú	1/21	an fiche aonú cuid
1/30	tríochadú		
1/100	céadú		
1/1,000	miliú		
1/1,000,000	milliúnú		

## IIb. FRACTION + *de* + DATIVE SINGULAR OF A NOUN

**cáca meala** 'honey cake'

1/2 of a honey cake	leath <sup>25</sup> de cháca meala
1/3 of a honey cake	trian de cháca meala <sup>26</sup>
2/3 of a honey cake	dhá thríán de cháca meala
1/4 of a honey cake	ceathrú de cháca meala
3/4 of a honey cake	trí cheathrú de cháca meala
1/5 of a honey cake	cúigiú de cháca meala
2/5 of a honey cake	dhá chúigiú de cháca meala
3/5 of a honey cake	trí chúigiú de cháca meala
4/5 of a honey cake	ceithre chúigiú de cháca meala
1/6 of a honey cake	séú de cháca meala
1/7 of a honey cake	seachtú de cháca meala
2/7 of a honey cake	dhá sheachtú de cháca meala
3/7 of a honey cake	trí sheachtú de cháca meala
4/7 of a honey cake	ceithre sheachtú de cháca meala
5/7 of a honey cake	cúig sheachtú de cháca meala
6/7 of a honey cake	sé sheachtú de cháca meala
1/8 of a honey cake	ochtú de cháca meala
1/9 of a honey cake	naoú de cháca meala
1/10 of a honey cake	deichiú de cháca meala
1/11 of a honey cake	aondéagú de cháca meala
1/12 of a honey cake	dódhéagú de cháca meala

## IIc. FRACTION + GENITIVE SINGULAR OF A NOUN

**pióg úll** 'apple pie'

1/2 of an apple pie	leath pióige úll
1/3 of an apple pie	trian pióige úll
2/3 of an apple pie	dhá thríán pióige úll
1/4 of an apple pie	ceathrú pióige úll
3/4 of an apple pie	trí cheathrú pióige úll
1/5 of an apple pie	cúigiú pióige úll
2/5 of an apple pie	dhá chúigiú pióige úll
3/5 of an apple pie	trí chúigiú pióige úll
4/5 of an apple pie	ceithre chúigiú pióige úll
1/6 of an apple pie	séú pióige úll
1/7 of an apple pie	seachtú pióige úll
2/7 of an apple pie	dhá sheachtú pióige úll
3/7 of an apple pie	trí sheachtú pióige úll
4/7 of an apple pie	ceithre sheachtú pióige úll
5/7 of an apple pie	cúig sheachtú pióige úll
6/7 of an apple pie	sé sheachtú pióige úll
1/8 of an apple pie	ochtú pióige úll
1/9 of an apple pie	naoú pióige úll
1/10 of an apple pie	deichiú pióige úll
1/11 of an apple pie	aondéagú pióige úll
1/12 of an apple pie	dódhéagú pióige úll

## Numbers: Personal

A **Personal Number** may be an **Indefinite Noun** (e.g. *bhí sé dhuine dhéag ag éisteacht leis '16 people* were listening to him') or a **Definite Noun** (e.g. *bhain na sé dhuine dhéag a bhí ag éisteacht leis sult as an léacht 'the 16 people* who were listening to him enjoyed the lecture').

There is no **Personal Number** for one individual; use the **N/A singular of the noun**. For emphasis, you may precede the noun with *aon* 'one' and follow it with *amháin* 'only' (e.g. *duine* 'a person' or *aon duine amháin* 'only one person', *bean* 'a woman' or *aon bhean amháin* 'only one woman').

The rules of lenition and eclipsis for **Cardinal Numbers 1-9** apply to all higher numbers of which 1-9 are a part. In other words, *naoi* '9' eclipses a following noun not only as 9 but also as 19, 29, etc. (e.g. *naoi ngadhar* '9 dogs', *naoi ngadhar déag* '19 dogs', *naoi ngadhar is fiche* '29 dogs'). The same is true of rules governing attributive adjectives after 1-9 nouns (e.g. *naoi ngadhar bhreaca* '9 spotted dogs', *naoi ngadhar déag bhreaca* '19 spotted dogs', *naoi ngadhar bhreaca is fiche* '29 spotted dogs').

The rules for Personal Numbers depend on how many people you are counting and how specifically you want to describe them.

For an explanation of lenition and eclipsis in the following charts, see *Nouns: Mutations*.

### IA. PERSONAL NUMBERS FOR 2-10 AND 12 HUMAN BEINGS

The following special forms *must* be used:

2 people	beirt ♀
3 people	triúr
4 people	ceathrar
5 people	cúigear
6 people	seisear
7 people	seachtar
8 people	ochtar
9 people	naonúr
10 people	deichniúr
12 people	dáréag

### IB. PERSONAL NUMBERS FOR 2-10 AND 12 SPECIFIC KINDS OF PEOPLE

The **Personal Numbers** in IA. are followed by a noun in the *genitive plural* (see note at end of section).

#### fear ‘man’

2 men	beirt <u>f</u> hear
3 men	triúr fear
4 men	ceathrar fear
5 men	cúigear fear
6 men	seisear fear
7 men	seachtar fear
8 men	ochtar fear
9 men	naonúr fear
10 men	deichniúr fear
12 men	dáréag fear

#### bean ♀ ‘woman’

2 women	beirt <u>b</u> han
3 women	triúr ban
4 women	ceathrar ban
5 women	cúigear ban
6 women	seisear ban
7 women	seachtar ban
8 women	ochtar ban
9 women	naonúr ban
10 women	deichniúr ban
12 women	dáréag ban

An adjective is *plural* and *lenited* after *beirt*.

An adjective is *singular* and *unlenited* after **Personal Numbers 3-10 and 12**:

#### fear ‘man’

2 brave men	beirt <u>f</u> hear <u>m</u> hisniú <u>l</u> a
3 brave men	triúr fear misniúil
4 brave men	ceathrar fear misniúil
5 brave men	cúigear fear misniúil
6 brave men	seisear fear misniúil
7 brave men	seachtar fear misniúil
8 brave men	ochtar fear misniúil
9 brave men	naonúr fear misniúil
10 brave men	deichniúr fear misniúil
12 brave men	dáréag fear misniúil

#### bean ♀ ‘woman’

2 brave women	beirt <u>b</u> han <u>m</u> hisniú <u>l</u> a
3 brave women	triúr ban misniúil
4 brave women	ceathrar ban misniúil
5 brave women	cúigear ban misniúil
6 brave women	seisear ban misniúil
7 brave women	seachtar ban misniúil
8 brave women	ochtar ban misniúil
9 brave women	naonúr ban misniúil
10 brave women	deichniúr ban misniúil
12 brave women	dáréag ban misniúil

### IIA. PERSONAL NUMBERS FOR 11, 13 OR MORE HUMAN BEINGS

Cardinal Numbers are followed by *duine* ‘person’.

The rules for lenition after 3-6 and for eclipsis after 7-10 apply.

*Déag* is *lenited* after a N/A singular noun with a final vowel.

11 people	aon duine dhéag
13 people	trí dhuine dhéag
14 people	ceithre dhuine dhéag
15 people	cúig dhuine dhéag
16 people	sé dhuine dhéag
17 people	seacht nduine dhéag
18 people	ocht nduine dhéag
19 people	naoi nduine dhéag
20 people	fiche duine
21 people	duine is fiche
22 people	beirt/dhá dhuine is fiche
23 people	trí dhuine is fiche
24 people	ceithre dhuine is fiche
25 people	cúig dhuine is fiche
26 people	sé dhuine is fiche
27 people	seacht nduine is fiche
28 people	ocht nduine is fiche
29 people	naoi nduine is fiche
30 people	tríocha duine
100 people	céad duine
157 people	céad caoga is seacht nduine

An adjective is *plural* and *lenited* after 3-19.

An adjective is *singular* after multiples of ten beginning with 20, and *lenited* after a *feminine* noun.

11 just people	aon duine dhéag cóir
13 just people	trí dhuine dhéag chóra
14 just people	ceithre dhuine dhéag chóra
15 just people	cúig dhuine dhéag chóra
16 just people	sé dhuine dhéag chóra
17 just people	seacht nduine dhéag chóra
18 just people	ocht nduine dhéag chóra
19 just people	naoi nduine dhéag chóra
20 just people	fiche duine cóir
21 just people	duine cóir is fiche
22 just people	dhá dhuine chóra is fiche
23 just people	trí dhuine chóra is fiche
24 just people	ceithre dhuine chóra is fiche
25 just people	cúig dhuine chóra is fiche
26 just people	sé dhuine chóra is fiche
27 just people	seacht nduine chóra is fiche
28 just people	ocht nduine chóra is fiche

29 just people	naoi nduine <u>chóra</u> is fiche
30 just people	tríocha duine cóir
100 just people	céad duine cóir
157 just people	céad caoga is seacht nduine <u>chóra</u>

## IIb. PERSONAL NUMBERS FOR 11, 13 OR MORE SPECIFIC KINDS OF PEOPLE

11 men	aon <u>fhear</u> déag	11 women	aon <u>bhean</u> déag
13 men	trí <u>fhear</u> déag	13 women	trí <u>bhean</u> déag
14 men	ceithre <u>fhear</u> déag	14 women	ceithre <u>bhean</u> déag
15 men	cúig <u>fhear</u> déag	15 women	cúig <u>bhean</u> déag
16 men	sé <u>fhear</u> déag	16 women	sé <u>bhean</u> déag
17 men	seacht <u>bhfear</u> déag	17 women	seacht <u>mbean</u> déag
18 men	ocht <u>bhfear</u> déag	18 women	ocht <u>mbean</u> déag
19 men	naoi <u>bhfear</u> déag	19 women	naoi <u>mbean</u> déag
20 men	fiche fear	20 women	fiche bean
21 men	fear is fiche	21 women	bean is fiche
22 men	dhá <u>fhear</u> is fiche	22 women	dhá <u>bhean</u> is fiche
23 men	trí <u>fhear</u> is fiche	23 women	trí <u>bhean</u> is fiche
24 men	ceithre <u>fhear</u> is fiche	24 women	ceithre <u>bhean</u> is fiche
25 men	cúig <u>fhear</u> is fiche	25 women	cúig <u>bhean</u> is fiche
26 men	sé <u>fhear</u> is fiche	26 women	sé <u>bhean</u> is fiche
27 men	seacht <u>bhfear</u> is fiche	27 women	seacht <u>mbean</u> is fiche
28 men	ocht <u>bhfear</u> is fiche	28 women	ocht <u>mbean</u> is fiche
29 men	naoi <u>bhfear</u> is fiche	29 women	naoi <u>mbean</u> is fiche
30 men	tríocha fear	30 women	tríocha bean
100 men	céad fear	100 women	céad bean
157 men	céad caoga is seacht <u>bhfear</u>	157 women	céad caoga is seacht <u>mbean</u>

An adjective is *plural and lenited* after 3-19.

An adjective is *singular* after multiples of ten beginning with 20, and is *lenited after a feminine noun*. In the examples below, remember that *dubh/dubha* is *not* lenited after *bean* (see *Adjectives: Mutations*), whereas ‘20 light-haired women’ would be *fiche bean fhionn*.

11 dark-haired men	aon fhear déag <u>dhubha</u>
13 dark-haired men	trí fhear déag <u>dhubha</u>
14 dark-haired men	ceithre fhear déag <u>dhubha</u>
15 dark-haired men	cúig fhear déag <u>dhubha</u>
16 dark-haired men	sé fhear déag <u>dhubha</u>
17 dark-haired men	seacht bhfear déag <u>dhubha</u>
18 dark-haired men	ocht bhfear déag <u>dhubha</u>
19 dark-haired men	naoi bhfear déag <u>dhubha</u>
20 dark-haired men	fiche fear déag dubh
21 dark-haired men	fear dubh is fiche
22 dark-haired men	dhá fhear <u>dhubha</u> is fiche
23 dark-haired men	trí fhear <u>dhubha</u> is fiche

24 dark-haired men	ceithre fhear <u>dhubha</u> is fiche
25 dark-haired men	cúig fhear <u>dhubha</u> is fiche
26 dark-haired men	sé fhear <u>dhubha</u> is fiche
27 dark-haired men	seacht bhfear <u>dhubha</u> is fiche
28 dark-haired men	ocht bhfear <u>dhubha</u> is fiche
29 dark-haired men	naoi bhfear <u>dhubha</u> is fiche
30 dark-haired men	tríocha fear dubh

100 dark-haired men	céad fear dubh
157 dark-haired men	céad caoga is seacht bhfear <u>dhubha</u>

11 dark-haired women	aon bhean déag <u>dhubha</u>
13 dark-haired women	trí bhean déag <u>dhubha</u>
14 dark-haired women	ceithre bhean déag <u>dhubha</u>
15 dark-haired women	cúig bhean déag <u>dhubha</u>
16 dark-haired women	sé bhean déag <u>dhubha</u>
17 dark-haired women	seacht mbean déag <u>dhubha</u>
18 dark-haired women	ocht mbean déag <u>dhubha</u>
19 dark-haired women	naoi mbean déag <u>dhubha</u>
20 dark-haired women	fiche bean dubh
21 dark-haired women	bean dubh is fiche
22 dark-haired women	dhá bhean <u>dubha</u> is fiche
23 dark-haired women	trí bhean <u>dubha</u> is fiche
24 dark-haired women	ceithre bhean <u>dubha</u> is fiche
25 dark-haired women	cúig bhean <u>dubha</u> is fiche
26 dark-haired women	sé bhean <u>dubha</u> is fiche
27 dark-haired women	seacht mbean <u>dubha</u> is fiche
28 dark-haired women	ocht mbean <u>dubha</u> is fiche
29 dark-haired women	naoi mbean <u>dubha</u> is fiche
30 dark-haired women	tríocha bean dubh
100 dark-haired women	céad bean dubh
157 dark-haired women	céag caoga is seacht mbean <u>dubha</u>

Note: I endorse the use of the genitive plural after Personal Numbers because a Personal Number is a noun and therefore a following noun *must* be in the genitive case. Although *An Caighdeán Oifigiúil* recommends use of the N/A singular on p. 41, it concedes that the rule is not absolute (*‘Is í foirm an ainmnigh uatha den ainmfhocal a thagann i ndiaidh beirt, triúr, etc. de ghnáth’* ‘The nominative singular is the form of the noun that comes after *beirt*, *triúr*, etc. usually’). Even grammars that urge use of the N/A singular after a Personal Number concede that *ban* ‘of women’ rather than *bean* ‘a woman’ must follow Personal Numbers, and it seems likely, as is hinted in 11.3.1 of *Cruinnscriobh na Gaeilge*, that the confusion arose from mistaking a noun’s weak genitive plural for its N/A singular.

# Interrogatives

The Preverbal Particles *an*, *nach*, *ar*, and *nár* indicate that a question is being asked, but the question itself contains a Preverbal Particle, a conjugated verb, and a subject (e.g. *an bhfuil tú?* ‘are you?’ *nár fhreagair sé?* ‘didn’t he answer?’). In contrast, **an Interrogative is itself a question.**

Because it denotes information that is unknown – what, who, where, etc. – **an Interrogative has neither gender nor number.** All Interrogatives share this characteristic but are used in different ways. Many of them are followed by nouns rather than by verbs. Others have one form for use with verbs in the present, future, conditional, and imperfect, and another form for use with past-tense verbs only. A few contain a form of the Copula and are explained more fully in *The Copula: What is it?~Which is it?*

Any Interrogative is a simple question (e.g. *cén fáth* ‘why?’ *cathain?* ‘when?’). In a more complex question, the Interrogative is followed by words or phrases that provide additional information (e.g. *cén fáth a bhfuil tú ag gáire?* ‘why are you laughing?’ *cathain a chloisfidimid an t-amhrán?* ‘when will we hear the song?’). The scope of a question may also be expanded by a Prepositional Pronoun, an Indirect Quotation, or a Relative Clause (see *Pronouns: Prepositional Pronouns, Dependent Clauses: Direct and Indirect Quotation~The Direct Relative~The Indirect Relative*).

Below is a list of the commonest Interrogatives and the rules for using them. Some dialectal variants have been included because they crop up even in texts that follow the *Caighdeán*. Where their rules for usage are the same, *Caighdeán* and non-*Caighdeán* forms are headwords of the same entry. Where their rules for usage differ, *Caighdeán* and non-*Caighdeán* forms are headwords of different entries.

## THE FORMAT OF EACH ENTRY IS:

**Interrogative** ‘translation’ Number of forms and the verb tenses and moods with which they are used. Type of word or Relative Particle that immediately follows the Interrogative, and whether that Relative Particle takes the independent or the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs. Any other details that are particular to verbs in the past tense.

Note: In spoken and written Irish, the Direct Relative Particle (DRP) *a* is commonly omitted after *cad*, *cé*, and *conas*. It is included here because it must be understood in order to connect the Interrogative and the verb.

**Cad? Céard?** ‘What?’ Has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the Direct Relative Particle, which takes the independent forms of Irregular Verbs. A verb with an initial vowel or ‘f’ is preceded by ‘d’ in the past tense.

Cad a íosfaimid amárach?  
‘What will we eat tomorrow?’

Céard a rinne Ellie inné?  
‘What did Ellie do yesterday?’

Cad a d’fhoghlaim tú inniu?  
‘What did you learn today?’

**Céard é? Cad é? Caidé?** ‘What is?’ Each of these contains a present-tense form of the Copula and has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by a noun or a pronoun that may in turn be followed by the Direct Relative Particle, which takes the independent forms of Irregular Verbs. A verb with an initial vowel or ‘f’ is preceded by ‘d’ in the past tense.

Céard í an fhadhb?  
‘What’s the problem?’

Cad é sin?  
‘What’s that?’

Caidé a d’iarr Matthew a hAon agus Matthew a Dó orainn?  
‘What did Matthew I and Matthew II ask of us?’

**Cé?** ‘Who?’ Has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the Direct Relative Particle, which takes the independent forms of Irregular Verbs. A verb with an initial vowel or ‘f’ is preceded by ‘d’ in the past tense.

Cé a cheannódh dán?  
‘Who would buy a poem?’

Cé a chonaic gaineamh buí?  
‘Who saw yellow sand?’

Cé a d’imigh ón trá anois beag?  
‘Who departed the beach just now?’

**Cérb? Cérbh? Cér?** ‘Who?’ and idiomatically ‘Whom?’ Each of these contains a form of the Copula, *cérb* the present tense, *cérbh* the past/conditional, and *cér* the past-tense Indirect Relative. *Cérb* and *cérbh* are immediately followed by *é*, *í*, *ea*, or *iad*, and *cér* by a Prepositional Pronoun.

Cérb é seo?  
‘Who is this?’

Cérbh iad na haisteoirí?  
‘Who were the actors?’

Cér leis an amharclann?  
‘Who owned the theater?’

**Cé acu? Cé agaibh? Cé againn?** ‘Which of them?’ ‘Which of you?’ ‘Which of us?’ Idioms of ‘**cé + Prepositional Pronoun**’ have one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the Direct Relative Particle, which takes the independent forms of Irregular Verbs. A verb with an initial vowel or ‘f’ is preceded by ‘d’ in the past tense.

Cé acu is fearr?  
‘Which of them is best?’

Cé agaibh<sup>27</sup> a thug an féirín?  
‘Which of you brought the gift?’



Cé againn<sup>27</sup> a d'fhág an cuireadh sa bhaile?  
'Which of us left the invitation at home?'

**Cén?** 'Which?' is *cé* plus the singular Definite Article *an* 'the', and it has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by an indefinite noun that may in turn be followed by another noun or by an Indirect Relative Particle, which takes the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs.

Cén sliabh é Everest?  
'Which mountain is Everest?'

Cén saghas sléibhe é?  
'What kind of mountain is it?'

Cén áit a ndeachaigh Catherine an samhradh seo caite?  
'Where did Catherine go last summer?'

**Cathain?** 'When?' Has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the Direct Relative Particle, which takes the independent forms of Irregular Verbs. A verb with an initial vowel or 'f' is preceded by 'd' in the past tense.

Cathain a aithriseofar an dán?  
'When will the poem be recited?'

Cathain a cheannaigh Jean leabhar an fhile?  
'When did Jean buy the poet's book?'

Cathain a d'éist sibh léi?  
'When did you listen to her?'

**Cén t-am?** '(At) what time?' Has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the Indirect Relative Particle, which takes the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs.

Cén t-am a n-ithidís?  
'At what time used they to eat?'

Cén t-am a ndearna Jennifer an chócaireacht?  
'At what time did Jennifer do the cooking?'

Cén t-am ar ghlanamar an bord?  
'At what time did we clear the table?'

**Cén uair?** 'When?' Has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the Direct Relative Particle, which takes the independent forms of Irregular Verbs. A verb with an initial vowel or 'f' is preceded by 'd' in the past tense.

Cén uair a phósfaid?  
'When will they be married?'

Cén uair a chuaigh siad go dtí an eaglais?  
'When did they go to the church?'

Cén uair a d'éalaigh siad leo?  
'When did they sneak away?'

**Conas?** 'How?' Has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the Direct Relative Particle, which takes the independent forms of Irregular Verbs. A verb with an initial vowel or 'f' is preceded by 'd' in the past tense.

Conas atá tú?  
'How are you?'

Conas a itear an sócamas seo?  
'How is this delicacy eaten?'

Conas a d'fhoghlaim Herman an cleas?  
'How did Herman learn the trick?'

**Cén chaoi?** 'How?' Has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the Indirect Relative Particle, which takes the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs.

Cén chaoi a bhfuil tú?  
'How are you?'

Cén chaoi ar bhuail Irene le Joy?  
'How did Irene meet up with Joy?'

Cén chaoi a ndearnamar é?  
'How did we do it?'

**Cá? Cáir?** 'Where?' *Cá* is used with the present, future, imperfect, and conditional, and *cáir* with the past tense only. Followed by a conjugated verb and by the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs.

Cá bhfuil an eochair?  
'Where is the key?'

Cáir chuir Rob í?  
'Where did Rob put it?'

Cá gcoinnimis í?  
'Where used we to keep it?'

**Cén áit?** 'Where?' Has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the Indirect Relative Particle, which takes the independent form of Irregular Verbs. A verb with an initial vowel or 'f' is preceded by 'd' in the past tense.

Cén áit a mairfidh Gene agus Patricia an bhliain seo chugainn?  
'Where will Gene and Patricia live next year?'

Cén áit nár scríobh Kilroy a ainm?  
'Where didn't Kilroy write his name?'

Cén áit ar íoc tú an cíos is troime?  
'Where did you pay the highest rent?'

**Cén fáth?** 'Why?' Has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the Indirect Relative Particle,<sup>28</sup> which takes the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs.



Cén fáth nach bhfreagróidís ár litir?  
'Why wouldn't they answer our letter?'

Cén fáth a rabhamar inár dtost?  
'Why were we silent?'

Cén fáth a n-osclaíonn sibh ár bpost gach lá?  
'Why do you open our mail every day?'

**Cad ina thaobh?** 'Why?' Has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the Subordinating Conjunction *go<sup>E</sup>, gur<sup>L</sup>, nach<sup>E</sup>, or nár<sup>L</sup>*.

Cad ina thaobh go gcreidfeá é?  
'Why would you believe him?'

Cad ina thaobh gur fhan mé?  
'Why did I stay?'

Cad ina thaobh nach n-aontófá liom?  
'Why wouldn't you agree with me?'

**Cé mhéad? Cá mhéad?** 'How much?' or 'How many?' Has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the N/A singular of a noun, or the genitive singular of an abstract or collective noun, that may in turn be followed by the Direct Relative Particle, which takes the independent forms of Irregular Verbs. A verb with an initial vowel or 'f' is preceded by 'd' in the past tense.

Cá mhéad airgid a chaitheamar inniu?  
'How much money did we spend today?'

Cé mhéad duine a chonaic Christina sa siopa?  
'How many people did Christina see in the shop?'

Cé mhéad uair a d'aithris tú an scéal seo?  
'How many times did you tell this story?'

**Cá fhad? Cén fad?** 'How long [in terms of time]?' Has one form that can be used with any verb tense or mood. Followed by the Direct Relative Particle, which takes the independent forms of Irregular Verbs. A verb with an initial vowel or 'f' is preceded by 'd' in the past tense.

Cá fhad a dhéanfaidh tú gearán?  
'How long will you complain?'

Cá fhad a bhíomar inár seasamh ansin?  
'How long were we standing there?'

Cá fhad a d'fhéach Deborah ar an bpictiúr?  
'How long did Deborah look at the picture?'

#### EXAMPLES OF INTERROGATIVES IN QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS:

Fiafraíodh díot cad a tharla anseo aréir.  
'You were asked what happened here last night.'

Céard é an t-am a chonaic tú an gluaisteán dubh?  
'What time did you see the black car?'

Cé a bhí á thiomáint?  
'Who was driving it?'

Cérbh é an paisinéir?  
'Who was the passenger?'

Faigh amach cé leis an gluaisteán.  
'Find out who owns the car.'

Cé faoi a raibh an bheirt sin ag caint?  
'About whom were those two people talking?'

Cé air nach ndearna tú cur síos fós?  
'Whom didn't you describe yet?'

Cé a bhainfeadh sochar as seo?  
'Who would profit from this?'

Cén lá den tseachtain nach n-oibríodh sé?  
'What day of the week used he not to work?'

Cathain a d'aistrigh sé a ghnáthchúrsa?  
'When did he change his routine?'

Cén t-am a bhfaca a chomharsa é ag dul isteach ina theach?  
'At what time did his neighbor see him going into his house?'

Cén uair a théadh sé a chodladh?  
'When used he to go to sleep?'

Conas ab fhéidir le duine fuinneog a bhriseadh gan é a mhúscailt?  
'How could a person break a window without awakening him?'

Cén chaoi eile a míneofá é?  
'How else would you explain it?'

Níl a fhios agam cá raibh an gadhar faire.  
'I don't know where the watchdog was.'

Cén áit sa chlós nárbh fhéidir leis an gadaí a fheiceáil?  
'Where in the yard couldn't he see the thief?'

Cén fáth nach ndearna sé tafann i rith na hoíche?  
'Why didn't he bark during the night?'

Cé mhéad airgid a bhí sa teach?  
'How much money was in the house?'

Cá fhad ó shin a rinne sé an uacht nua?  
'How long ago did he make the new will?'

# Lookalikes

Several of the commonest little words and particles look exactly alike, even though they are different types of words with different grammatical functions. **To distinguish the various incarnations of *a, an, ar, dá, go, gur, na, nach, nár,* and *ní,* you must look at 1) the mutation it causes 2) the context in which it occurs.** The format of each description below is:

## The Common Little Word or Particle THE MUTATION IT CAUSES

Grammatical name of word or particle; 'translation'. Types of words that it usually precedes or follows.

### EXAMPLES OF USAGE.

[literal translation, when helpful]  
'Idiomatic translation.'

#### A<sup>h</sup>

Possessive Adjective; 'her'. Precedes a noun in any case *except* the vocative.

Níl a gluaisteán sa gharáiste.  
'Her car isn't in the garage.'

Ar ith sí a húll?  
'Did she eat her apple?'

Particle; **no translation**. Precedes Cardinal Numbers.

An bhfuil caibidil a haon chomh suimiúil le caibidil a dó?  
'Is chapter one as interesting as chapter two?'

Cad ina thaobh go bhfuil Turla ag glanadh an urláir ar a trí a chlog ar maidin?  
'Why is Turla cleaning the floor at three o'clock in the morning?'

#### A<sup>l</sup>

Vocative Particle; **no translation necessary**, but sometimes translated 'O'. Precedes a noun in the vocative case.

Ar mhaith leat cupán tae, a Chaitlín?  
'Would you like a cup of tea, Caitlín?'

A Mhíchíl, an bhfuil tú i do dhúiseacht fós?  
'Mícheál, are you awake yet?'

Possessive Adjective; 'his'. Precedes a noun in any case *except* the vocative.

Chuaigh a dheartháir in éineacht leis.  
'His brother went along with him.'

Nár fhág sé a chlaíomh ar an mbord?  
'Didn't he leave his sword on the table?'

Preposition; 'to'. Precedes a Verbal Noun and often follows the object of the Verbal Noun.

Tosóidh na mic léinn a chodladh go headra.  
'The students will start to sleep late.'

Is deacair obair a dhéanamh i rith na laethanta saoire.  
'It's difficult to do work during the holidays.'

Direct Relative Particle; 'that, who, whom'. Appears between the subject and the verb or the object and the verb in an *affirmative* relative clause. The verb can be in any tense or mood, but the verb *cannot* be the Copula. A past, conditional, or imperfect verb-form that begins with 'd' + vowel' or 'd' + fh' retains its 'd' and is not lenited.

Fásfaidh gach síol a chuireann tú.  
'Every seed that you plant will grow.'

Cé hé an seanduine a mhair sa teach seo?  
'Who is the old man who lived in this house?'

Ar chuimhin leis na húlla a d'ithimis tar éis titim dóibh go talamh?  
'Would he remember the apples that we used to eat after they fell to the ground?'

Particle; 'how, so'. Precedes an abstract noun.

Ní chreidfeá a shaoire a cheannaíomar an ríomhaire seo!  
'You wouldn't believe how cheaply we bought this computer!'

Baineadh geit as nuair a chonaic sé a láidre a bhí an ghaoth.  
'He was startled when he saw the wind was so strong.'

#### A<sup>E</sup>

Possessive Adjective; 'their'. Precedes a noun in any case *except* the vocative.

Dúradh go gcuireadh a n-athair geallta.  
'It was said that their father used to place bets.'

Cé mhéad a thug siad ar a dticéid?  
'How much did they pay for their tickets?'

Indirect Relative Particle; 'whom, whose, which' with a simple preposition or a possessive adjective. Appears in an indirect relative clause. Precedes the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs, and Regular Verbs in any tense or mood *except* the past. The verb *cannot* be the Copula.

Fiafraigh den chailín a bhfuil an cóta dubh uirthi.  
[ask of the girl whom is the coat black around her]  
'Ask the girl in the black coat.'

Sin é an fear a mbuafaidh a chapall an rás.  
'That is the man whose horse will win the race.'

Cé ceann díobh seo an fhuinneog a dtagaidís tríthi?  
'Which of these is the window through which they used to come?'

**Pronoun; 'all that'.** Precedes a verb in any tense or mood, and takes the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs. The verb *cannot* be the Copula.

Chuir Beryl síos i mBéarla ar a bhfaca sí.  
'Beryl described in English all that she saw.'

Ar tugadh ar ais daoibh ar goideadh uaibh?  
'Was all that was stolen from you restored to you?'

## AN

**Interrogative Present-Tense Copula; 'is/are?'** Begins a question and precedes a noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, preposition, or prepositional pronoun.

An le Michelle an geansaí seo?  
'Is this jersey Michelle's?'

An tusa an bhean ar mhian léi *Baked Alaska*?  
'Are you the woman who wanted Baked Alaska?'

An ansin a bhí Diarmaid ag rince?  
'Is it there that Diarmaid was dancing?'

An tirim nó fliuch atá an brat péinte sin?  
'Is that coat of paint dry or wet?'

## AN<sup>t</sup>

**Singular Definite Article, 'the'.** Precedes a singular masculine noun with initial vowel in the N/A case, a singular masculine noun with initial 's + l, n, or r' in the genitive case, and a singular feminine noun with initial 's + l, n, or r' in every case *except* the genitive.

Bíodh an t-ádh ort!  
'Good luck!'

Ar thuirling sibh ó bharr an tsléibhe?  
'Did you descend from the top of the mountain?'

Tochrais an tsreang ar an spól.  
'Wind the string on the spool.'

## AN<sup>l</sup>

**Singular Definite Article, 'the'.** Precedes a singular masculine noun in the genitive case, or a singular feminine noun in the N/A case.

An féidir leat deireadh an bhóthair a fheiceáil?  
'Can you see the end of the road?'

Cailleadh an bhróg chlé ar an staighre.  
'The left shoe was lost on the stair.'

## AN<sup>e</sup>

**Interrogative Particle; no translation.** Begins an affirmative question, takes the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs, and may precede a Regular Verb in any tense or mood *except* the past. The verb *cannot* be the Copula.

An bhfaigheann gach seanstoca seanbhróg?  
'Does every old sock find an old shoe?'

An dtiocfaidh ciall roimh aois?  
'Will sense precede age?'

An mbeimis marbh le tae nó marbh gan é?  
'Would we be dead with tea or dead without it?'

♥ These examples are based on proverbs: *níl aon tseanstoca ná faigheann seanbhróg* 'there's no old sock that doesn't find an old shoe', comparable to 'there's someone for everyone'; *ní thagann ciall roimh aois* 'sense does not precede age'; *marbh le tae, marbh gan é* 'dead with tea, dead without it' comparable to 'you can't live with it, you can't live without it'.

## AR

**Defective Verb** that has only a 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. and a 3<sup>rd</sup> p. pl.; '**says, said**'. Appears only after Direct Quotation. Precedes a pronoun subject that often has an emphatic suffix.

'A bhuachail, beidh tú buartha go bpósfaidh tú agus ón uair sin, ní bheidh suaimhneas go deo ort!' ar seisean.  
'My boy, you'll be troubled until you marry and from then on, you'll never be at ease!' he said.'

'Nuair a chacann gé, cacann siad go léir,' ar siadsan.  
'When one goose poops, they all poop', they say.'

♥ These examples are proverbs.

**Indirect Relative Present-Tense Copula** (see also **gur**, below); '**which, whom, whose is**' plus preposition. Precedes a noun or an adjective.

An í Fiona an bhean ar féidir léi rince?  
[is Fiona the woman to whom is an ability with her dancing]  
'Is Fiona the woman who can dance?'

Cá bhfuil na mic léinn ar maith leo Laidin?  
[where are the students to whom is good with them Latin]  
'Where are the students who like Latin?'

**Part of a Compound Preposition; translated idiomatically with a following noun.** This combination of '**simple preposition + noun**' is followed by a noun in the genitive case.

'Seas ar aghaidh an dorais, a dúirt sé.  
'Stand in front of the door', he said.'

Seas ar gcúl, tá sé ar tí titim!  
'Stand back, it's about to fall!'

Preposition; **translated idiomatically with a following noun**. This is the same Preposition as the first **ar<sup>L</sup>** below, except that it does not cause lenition when used in certain set expressions (e.g. of condition or location).

Ná tar abhaile ar meisce!  
'Don't come home drunk!'

An ndeachaigh gach duine ar bord loinge?  
'Did everyone go aboard the ship?'

## AR<sup>L</sup>

Preposition; **'on'**. Precedes a noun in the dative case.

Chrochtaí an coire ar chrúca.  
'The cauldron used to be hung on a hook.'

An ar chathaoir a d'fhág tú do lámhainní, a Ghiolla Bhrighde?  
'Is it on a chair that you left your gloves, Giolla Brighde?'

♥ The second example refers to poem XIV *Dearmad do fhágghas ag Aodh* 'I accidentally left something with Aodh' by Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe, one of the very best bardic poets whose work has survived. His poems can be read in N. J. A. Williams, ed. and trans., *The Poems of Giolla Brighde Mac Con Midhe*, Irish Texts Society 51 (Dublin: Irish Texts Society, 1980).

Interrogative Particle; **no translation**. Precedes the past tense of verbs without dependent forms. The verb *cannot* be the Copula.

Ar gheall tú dó go bhfaigheadh sé an chuid is fearr?  
'Did you promise him that he would get the best portion?'

Ar thit Bricriu ar an gcarn bruscair?  
'Did Bricriu fall on the garbage heap?'

♥ These examples refer to events in *Fled Bricrend*, an early Irish tale that can be found in translation in Gantz (1984).

Interrogative Past/Conditional Copula; **'was/were/would be?'** Precedes a noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, preposition, or prepositional pronoun that does *not* have initial 'f' or 'f + Vowel'.

Ar mhaith libh an mhuc?  
[would be good with you the pig]  
'Would you like the pig?'

♥ This example refers to *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* another early Irish tale that can be found in *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*.

Indirect Relative Particle; **'which, whom, whose'** plus a preposition. Precedes the past tense of verbs without dependent forms. The verb *cannot* be the Copula.

An bhfuil aithne agat ar an mbruinneall ar bheannaigh sé di?  
'Are you acquainted with the maiden whom he greeted?'

An iad sin na mná ar thug a bhean chéile sceana dóibh chun an bhruinneall a mharú?

'Are those the women to whom his wife gave knives to kill the maiden?'

♥ These examples refer to *Serlige Con Culainn* in which Emer, the wronged wife, plots to murder Fand, the wronging mistress of Emer's wronging husband, Cú Chulainn. This too is an early Irish tale to be sought in *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*.

## DÁ<sup>h</sup>

Preposition *de* or *do* + Possessive Adjective *a*; **'from/off/of/to/for her'**. Precedes a noun in the dative case.

Thit an hata dá ceann.  
'The hat fell from her head.'

Tabhair é dá hathair.  
'Give it to her father.'

## DÁ<sup>L</sup>

Preposition *de* or *do* + Possessive Adjective *a*; **'from/off/of/to/for his'**. Precedes a noun in the dative case.

Seo duit, úll dá chrann úll.  
'Here you are, an apple from his apple-tree.'

Nach mian leis fáinne a cheannach dá bhean chéile?  
'Doesn't he want to buy a ring for his wife?'

Preposition *de* + Particle *a*; **'however'**. Precedes an abstract noun that denotes a quality.

Dá fheabhas a cháil, ní bhfaigheadh sé an post.  
'However excellent his reputation, he would not get the job.'

Fanfaidh mé leat, dá fhad a bheidh tú thar lear.  
'I will wait for you, however long you will be abroad.'

Numeric Adjective; **'two'**. Preceded by the singular definite article, and followed by a noun.

Nach mar a chéile an dá éan sin!  
'Aren't those two birds alike!'

Cá bhfaca Ristead an dá ghadhar?  
'Where did Ristead see the two dogs?'

## DÁ<sup>E</sup>

Preposition *de* + Possessive Adjective *a*; **'from/off/of/to/for their'**. Precedes a noun in the dative case.

Tabharfar bronntanais dá gcairde.  
'Gifts will be given to their friends.'

Déanfaidh na leanaí 'Seán na gealaí' dá bpuimcín.  
'The children will make a jack-o-lantern of their pumpkin.'

Conjunction; 'if'. Precedes a verb in the conditional mood.

Dá mbrisfí é, bheadh fearg air!  
'If it should be broken, he would be angry!'

Dá dtiocfá, bhainfeá sult as an dráma.  
'If you should come, you would enjoy the play.'

Preposition *do* or *de* + Indirect Relative Particle *a*; 'to/for which/whom/whose' with *do*, 'from/off/of those which/whom/whose' with *de*, 'that/when' with *de* when it follows a noun of time or place. Precedes a verb in any tense or mood, and takes the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs. The verb *cannot* be the Copula.

Cé acu is fearr leat dá bhfeiceann tú?  
'Which do you like best of all that you see?'

Lá dá raibh mé ar an staire, bhuail mé le fear nach bhfaca mé le blianta.  
'One day when I was on the stair, I met a man whom I hadn't seen in years.'

## GO

Preverbal Particle; 'may'. Precedes a verb in the subjunctive mood to express a positive wish.

Go raibh maith agat.  
[may be good at you]  
'Thank you.'

Go maire tú é!  
'May you live to wear it!'

## GO<sup>h</sup>

Particle; **no translation**. Precedes an adjective to give it an adverbial function, often indicated by the translation of 'go + adjective' as 'adjective + -ly'. May also precede adverbs and predicative adjectives.

Nach bhfuil tú ag breathnú go hálainn inniu, a Mháiréad!  
'Don't you look beautiful today, Máiréad!'

Canann Beth go haoibhinn.  
'Beth sings pleasantly.'

Preposition; 'to, until'. Precedes a noun.

An ndeachaigh siad go hÁth na mBó?  
'Did they go to Áth na mBó?'

Páirceáil: Luan go hAoine amháin.  
Parking: Monday thru Friday only.

## GO<sup>E</sup>

Preposition; **no translation**. Occurs between two nouns to indicate that the first noun has the measurement or quality of the second noun.

Ritheann capaill míle go leith sa Belmont Stakes.  
'Horses run a mile and a half in the Belmont Stakes.'

Cath go bás a bhí ann.  
'It was a fight to the death.'

Conjunction; 'that, until, and', and may be translated with another conjunction as 'because' or 'so that'. Precedes the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs, and Regular Verbs in any tense or mood *except* the past.

Chuala mé go mbeidh bhur mac ag teacht.  
'I heard that your son will be coming.'

Fan go n-inseoidh sé a ainm dúinn.  
'Wait until he tells us his name.'

Shiúil siad amach go bhfaca a bhád ar an bhfarraige.  
'They walked out and saw his boat on the sea.'

An bhfuil díomá ort go bhfuil d'athair ag troid leat?  
'Are you disappointed because your father is fighting with you?'

Seo duit do ghaisce le go mbeidh tú réidh chun catha.  
'Here are your weapons so that you will be ready for battle.'

♥ These examples refer to events in *Aided Óenfir Aife*, an early Irish tale on which W. B. Yeats's play 'On Baile's Strand' is very, very loosely based. A translation of the early version of the story can be found in Gantz (1984).

Indirect Relative Particle; 'which, whom, whose' plus preposition; found chiefly in Munster Irish, where it is interchangeable with the *Caighdeán's* Indirect Relative Particle **a<sup>E</sup>**. Precedes the dependent forms of Irregular Verbs, and Regular Verbs in any tense or mood *except* the past. The verb *cannot* be the Copula.

An í sin an bhean go raibh tú ag caint fúithi?  
'Is that the woman of whom you were speaking?'

Sin í an bhean go n-oibríonn a hiníon sa bhanc.  
'That is the woman whose daughter works in the bank.'

Cé acu an bhean go dtaistealóidh tú léi?  
'Which of them is the woman with whom you will travel?'

## GUR

Dependent Present-Tense Copula; 'that is/are'. Precedes a noun, adjective, adverb, preposition, or prepositional pronoun.

Meas tú gur lao é sin?  
'Do you think that that's a calf?'



Creidim gur dual do bhó a lao féin a lí.  
'I believe that it's natural for a cow to lick her own calf.'

An bhfuil tú cinnte gur anseo a rugadh é?  
'Are you certain that it's here that he was born?'

Is dócha gur as California é.  
'It's likely that he is from California.'

Deir sí gur léi an lao.  
'She says that the calf is hers.'

♥ These examples refer to a proverb, *ní sleamhain lao ná líonn a mháthair* é 'there's no sleek calf that isn't licked by its mother.'

## GUR<sup>L</sup>

Conjunction; **'that'**. Precedes past tense of verbs that have no dependent forms. The verb *cannot* be the Copula.

An dóigh leat gur imigh sé róluath?  
'Do you think that he departed too early?'

Is dóigh liom gur tháinig sé róluath!  
'I think that he came too early!'

Dependent Past/Conditional of Copula; **'that was/were/would be'**. Precedes a noun, adjective, adverb, preposition, or prepositional pronoun that does *not* begin with a vowel.

D'aontóinn leat gur chóir dó fanacht sa bhaile.  
'I would agree with you that it would be proper for him to stay at home.'

Chuala mé gur lasmuigh den chlós a chonacthas é.  
'I heard that it was outside the yard that he was seen.'

An ndúirt tú gur don iníon a thabharfar é?  
'Did you say that it was to the daughter that it will be given?'

Cuimhní gú gur linne an cat.  
'Remember that the cat is ours.'

## NA<sup>h</sup>

Plural Definite Article; **'the'**. Precedes a plural noun with an initial vowel in the N/A case.

Cuir na huibheacha sa bhosca.  
'Put the eggs in the box.'

An dtabharfá isteach na héadaí?  
'Would you bring in the clothes?'

Singular Definite Article; **'the'**. Precedes a singular feminine noun in the genitive case.

An bhfuil eolas na háite seo agat?  
[is knowledge of this place at you]  
'Do you know this place?'

## NA<sup>E</sup>

Plural Definite Article; **'the'**. Precedes a plural noun in the genitive case.

Chualamar léim na n-iasc sa loch.  
'We heard the leaping of the fish in the lake.'

Cad ina thaobh go bhfuil cosa na ngéanna cam?  
'Why are the feet of the geese crooked?'

## NACH

Negative Dependent Present-Tense Copula; **'that . . . not'** and idiomatically. Begins a dependent clause.

Is léir nach ionann iad.  
'It's clear that they aren't the same.'

Is dócha nach foláir duit oibriú inniu.  
'It's likely that you must work today.'

Negative Interrogative Present-Tense Copula; **'is/are not?'** and idiomatically. Begins a negative question, and precedes a noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, preposition, or prepositional pronoun.

Nach caisearbhán é sin?  
'Isn't that a dandelion?'

Nach tú féin a bheidh ag glanadh an ghairdín?  
'Isn't it yourself who will be weeding the garden?'

Nach breá leis an obair?  
'Doesn't he like the work?'

Nach amuigh atá na luibheanna ag fás?  
'Isn't it outside that the herbs are growing?'

Nach leo na bróga salacha sin?  
'Aren't those dirty shoes theirs?'

Negative Relative Present-Tense Copula; **'that/who/whom is/are not'** plus a preposition in Indirect Relative Clauses. Begins a Direct or an Indirect Relative Clause. Precedes a noun or adjective.

Is fear é nach áil leis airgead a chaitheamh.  
'He is a man who doesn't want to spend money.'

Tá siad in áit nach maith leo fanacht ann.  
'They are in a place in which they don't like to stay.'

## NACH<sup>E</sup>

Negative Interrogative Particle; **'not?'** Precedes the dependent past-tense forms of Irregular Verbs, and any tense or mood *except* the past of Regular Verbs. The verb *cannot* be the Copula.

Nach bhfuil tuirse ort?  
'Aren't you tired?'

Nach dtaitneodh píosa seacláide le hÁine?  
'Wouldn't Áine like a piece of chocolate?'

## NÍ

Negative Present of Copula; 'is not'. Precedes a noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, preposition, or prepositional pronoun.

Ní cuileog choitianta í.  
'It is not an ordinary fly.'

Ní hí Étaín s'againne an bhean seo.  
'This woman is not our Étaín.'

Ní fearr le Midir Fuamnach ná Étaín.  
'Midir doesn't prefer Fuamnach to Étaín.'

Ní i ndeilbh dhaonna atá Étaín, ach i ndeilbh chuileoige áille.  
'It's not in human shape that Étaín is, but in a beautiful fly's shape.'

♥ These examples refer to events in *Tochmarc Étaíne* an early Irish tale that can be found in translation in Gantz (1984).

Noun; 'thing'. May follow an adjective or a verb.

Ar tharla aon ní anseo agus mise as baile?  
'Did anything happen here while I was away?'

Tá sí traochta, ní nach ionadh, agus í ina dúiseacht le trí lá anois.  
[is she exhausted, a thing that's not a wonder, and she in her waking with three days now]  
'She's exhausted, and no wonder, since she's been awake for three days now.'

## NÍL

Negative Preverbal Particle; 'not'. Precedes the dependent past of Irregular Verbs, and any tense or mood *except* the past of Regular and Irregular Verbs. The verb *cannot* be the Copula.

Ní dheachaigh Drew chun na ceolchoirme aréir.  
'Drew did not go to the concert last night.'

Ní bheimid inár suí i ngar don ardán.  
'We will not be sitting near the stage.'

Ní sheasann sac folamh.  
'An empty sack doesn't stay upright.'

Ní chuirfeá an breac sa phota sula gcuire tú san eangach é!  
'You would not put the trout in the pot before you put it in the net!'

♥ The third example is a proverb, referring to the weakness caused by an empty stomach. The fourth example refers to the proverb *cuir an breac san eangach sula gcuire tú sa phota é* 'put the trout in the net before you put it in the pot', comparable to 'don't put the cart before the horse', i.e. do things in the proper order.

# Footnotes

## Part 1

1 For the full text of rules, see pp. 100-128 of *Gramadach na Gaeilge agus Litriú na Gaeilge: An Caighdeán Oifigiúil* (1958; Baile Átha Cliath/Dublin: Oifig an tSoláthair, an dara heagrán, 1979). Also watch for the published version of Dr. Brian Ó Conchubhair's presentation 'Irish Orthography 1880-1900: a dismal swamp?' from the *Twentieth Annual Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, October 2000.

2 For 'A History of Irish Script', see Máirtín Ó Murchú, *The Irish Language, Aspects of Ireland 10* (Dublin: Government of Ireland, 1985), pp. 69-73.

3 See *Adjectives: Degrees*.

4 A transitive verb takes an object, i.e. the activity is inflicted on something else (*tá sé ag tógáil balla* 'he is building a wall'). An intransitive verb does not take an object, i.e. the activity is simply enacted by the performer (e.g. *tá sé ag teacht anois* 'he is coming now').

5 See his 'Editor's Preface', esp. pp. vii-xi.

6 Myles na gCopaleen devoted at least two instalments of his *Irish Times* column, 'Cruiskeen Lawn', to seemingly contradictory definitions in Dinneen's dictionary. See *The Best of Myles*, ed. Kevin O'Nolan (1968; London: Paladin Books, 1990), pp. 276-79 and the corresponding entries in Dinneen's dictionary.

7 This *do* is part of the independent form of the verb. Like many puzzling aspects of Modern Irish, it has been retained from Old Irish.

8 Edited by Seóirse Mac Clúin (Baile Átha Cliath/Dublin: Comhlucht Oideachais na hÉireann, 1922).

9 Unless you knew at least one of the Irish equivalents given for different senses of 'fast', you would have to look them up to discover which sense is meant in each case.

10 This is not a typo. *Fuair* is never lenited. By anything. Ever.

11 *Níl* = *ní* + *fhuil*.

12 *An* does not prefix 'n' to a verb with an initial vowel because the 'n' of *an* already provides the sound of the eclipsis.

13 In its usual individualistic way, *bí* 'be' has a separate present habitual form (see *Irregular Verbs: Bí*). No other verb distinguishes between the present and the present habitual. For example, *imíonn tú* can mean 'you depart [at this moment]' or 'you [do habitually] depart'.

14 The *ó* of *cheannóidh* and *cheannófá* is actually the future and conditional Verb Stem. A Verb Stem is a letter or series of letters added to the Root of the Verb to indicate tense and mood, but not person or number. I am presenting the Verb Stem as part of the Personal Ending because it is easier to learn them as a single unit.

- 15 The final consonants can be any combination *except* **-gh**.
- 16 When the final consonants are **-th**, the **-th** vanishes before the **'t'** of an ending.
- 17 The past autonomous is never lenited.
- 18 See note 16.
- 19 In these descriptions, the **'i'** of final **-igh** is not counted as a vowel.
- 20 No length-mark is placed over a long **'o'** when it occurs in the combination **'eo'** (see *Conventions: Length-Marks*). Although verbs with final **a/o/u** + **-igh** and final **-eoigh** differ in spelling, in both cases the final sound is a long vowel, and this why they follow the same pattern of conjugation.
- 21 *Báim* 'I drown' means 'I drown something else'. If you yourself have drowned, returned as a ghost, and now wish to inform the coroner, you must make yourself the object of the autonomous form: *bádh mé* 'I was drowned.' As in English, many verbs in Irish can be used either transitively (takes an object) or intransitively (does not take an object), so make sure you understand the difference before you use the verb.
- 22 The **'i'** is short before an ending with initial **'t'**.
- 23 See note 17.
- 24 See note 16.
- 25 See note 17.
- 26 The 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. imperative is the root for the present autonomous, the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. imperfect, the imperfect autonomous, and the past tense except for the 1<sup>st</sup> p. pl. and the autonomous. The root for the 1<sup>st</sup> p. pl. past, the past autonomous, and all other tenses and moods is formed by eliminating the final **'i'** to broaden the final consonant.
- 27 See note 26.
- 28-30 See note 17.
- 31 Despite all previous warnings, the dependent form past autonomous of this verb is lenited after *ní*.
- 32 The Irish verb *beir* shares two primary meanings of the English verb 'bear': 1) to take or bear away (past tense 'borne') 2) to give birth (past tense 'born').
- 33 See note 16.
- 34 The same form may be either past or conditional; the intended meaning must be inferred from context.
- 35 This is the idiom frequently used to express identities that are subject to change, such as a profession (*bhí mé i mo mhúinteoir le dhá bhliain, ach tá mé i mo scríbhneoir anois* 'I was a teacher for two years, but I'm a writer now'), life-stage (*nuair a bhí mé i mo chailín, bhí an loch sin níos mó* 'when I was a girl, that lake was bigger'), or 'fake' identities (*bhí mé i mo shagart sa dráma* 'I was a priest in the drama').

## Part 2

- 1 Except the pronouns *é, í, iad*. See note 2.
- 2 The *Caighdeán* has simply *ba é, ba í, ba iad*, but in Connemara Irish *ba* prefixes **'dh'** to *é, í, and iad*. See Séamas Ó Murchú, *An Teanga Bheo: Gaeilge Chonamara* (Dublin: Institiúid Teangeolaíochta Éireann, 1998), p. 50.
- 3 But prefixes **'h'** to *é, í, ea, iad*, yielding *ní hé, ní hí, ní hea, ní hiad*, and also to adjectives and some nouns with an initial vowel.
- 4 In Munster Irish *gurb* is also used as the Indirect Relative.
- 5 Prefixes **'h'** to *é, í, and iad* in the constructions described in *The Copula: 'What is it?~'Which is it?'*
- 6 For the differences between *má* and *dá*, see *Dependent Clauses: 'If' and 'If Not'*.
- 7 This Copula construction is sometimes called 'classification'.
- 8 Don't panic. The predicate of a sentence is everything (yes, everything) *except* the subject of the sentence, so it is necessary to specify the Predicate **Noun** in order to exclude verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, etc.
- 9 *Céard* 'what is?' is a contraction of *'cad + é + an + rud'* in which *cad* contains the Copula and *an rud* is the Predicate Noun.
- 10 *É, í, and iad* are **Subject Pronouns** when used with the Copula (see lab in *Pronouns: Types*).
- 11 The Proleptic Pronoun is explained here because it was accepted into the *Caighdeán*, but it is a feature that arose in Munster Irish.
- 12 In this shorter answer, the Copula is implied by the speaker or writer and understood by the listener or reader.
- 13 'Gaeilgeoir' means 'Irish-speaker'; 'Gaeligore' is Patrick Power's designation for a very particular sort of Irish-speaker in his translation of Myles na gCopaleen's *An Béal Bocht*. See *The Poor Mouth*, trans. Patrick C. Power (London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1973).
- 14 This Copula construction is sometimes called 'identification'.
- 15 See note 11 above.
- 16 In this shorter answer, the Copula is implied by the speaker or writer and understood by the listener or reader. Cf. the similar short answer in IA, *The Copula: 'What is it?'*
- 17 Cf. the use of *is ea* and *ní hea* in IIA, *The Copula: 'What is it?'*
- 18 A substantive is a word that functions grammatically as a noun but lacks major features of a noun, e.g. gender. Many substantives do not inflect for case or number and are used only in a handful of idioms.
- 19 If the Copula is followed by a Proleptic Pronoun, which is also unstressed, the first stressed element is the definite or proper noun after the Proleptic Pronoun.

20 Use of the present-tense copula in such cases is not equally common in all dialects. In Connemara Irish, for example, 'he was the man I liked best' would be *ba (dh)é an fear ab fhearr liom*.

21 See note 11.

22 Because an adjective must qualify a noun, the syntax for Fronting an adjective is really a version of 'Copula + Predicate + Subject' in which 'Predicate = Adjective' and 'Subject = Noun + Relative Clause'.

23 This is the one type of Indirect Relative Clause that works with an adjective (see also *a<sup>E</sup>* 'all that' in *Lookalikes*).

24 **To Backform** is to restore a word to a more basic form – the N/A singular of a noun or the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. imperative of a verb – by undoing the changes that specify a different case, person, number, tense, and/or mood. A person familiar with Noun Declensions could backform *éisc* to *iasc* by reversing the internal-vowel change from 'éi' to 'ia'. Likewise, a person familiar with Regular Verbs could backform any conjugated form of the verb to the 2<sup>nd</sup> p. sg. imperative by removing the personal ending and any lenition that occurs, e.g. *dhúnfá* ⇒ *dhún* ⇒ *dún*.

25 It may be reassuring to know that the genitive singular of a Verbal Noun is often the same as the Past Participle (i.e. the **-ed** form), which is also used as a Verbal Adjective (as in *an t-adhmad dóite* 'the burned wood'). Alas, the resemblance between these two verb-forms is of limited practical use, because there are no infallible characteristic endings for Past Participles any more than there are for Verbal Nouns.

26 In this Verbal Noun Construction *do* becomes *a*, which combines with *a<sup>h</sup>* 'her', *a<sup>L</sup>* 'his', *a<sup>E</sup>* 'their', and *ár<sup>E</sup>* 'our' to yield *á<sup>h</sup>* 'at her', *á<sup>L</sup>* 'at his', *á<sup>E</sup>* 'at their' and *dár<sup>E</sup>* 'at our'.

27 In this Verbal Noun Construction, *i* as usual becomes *in* when it is followed by a vowel. Consequently, when *i* combines with *a<sup>h</sup>* 'her', *a<sup>L</sup>* 'his', *a<sup>E</sup>* 'their', and *ár<sup>E</sup>* 'our', it yields *ina<sup>h</sup>* 'in her', *ina<sup>L</sup>* 'in his', *ina<sup>E</sup>* 'in their', and *inár<sup>E</sup>* 'in our'. *I* becomes *in* before *bhur<sup>E</sup>* 'your', but the two words do not combine.

28 In Ulster Irish every combination of 'Simple Preposition + Singular Definite Article' lenites where possible a following noun. In Munster Irish 'de/do/fé/ó + Plural Definite Article' can result in *desna*, *dosna*, *fésna* and *ósna* instead of *de na*, *do na*, *faoi na* and *ó na*.

29 The singular Definite Article neither lenites nor eclipses the initial 'd', 't', or 's' of a noun.

30 The singular Definite Article prefixes 't' to a feminine noun with initial 'sl/sn/sr or s + Vowel' in every case *except* the genitive.

31 The singular Definite Article prefixes 't' to a masculine noun with initial 'sl/sn/sr or s + Vowel' in the genitive case *only*.

32 In *feiceann mac an chait an luch* 'the cat's son sees the mouse', the subject-object relationship of *mac an chait-an luch* is created by the transitive verb *feiceann*, whereas the noun-noun relationship of *mac an chait* is self-

contained: *béarfaimid ar mhac an chait* 'we will catch the cat's son', *a mhic an chait, tar os comhair na cúirte!* 'cat's son, come before the court!'

33 For example, there is no difference in meaning between *píosa pióige* 'a piece of pie', in which *pióg* is in the Genitive Case, and *píosa de phióg* 'a piece from a pie', in which *pióg* is in the Dative Case.

34 This could also mean a bottle designed to hold milk, in which case the usage would belong to group 5) kind.

35 *Talamh* has an alternate frequently-used genitive singular, *talún*. When *talún* is used instead of *talamh*, the word is treated as a Fifth-Declension feminine noun instead of as a First-Declension masculine noun. See *Nouns: Fifth Declension*.

36 Note broadening of *gáir-* to *gár-* in order to accommodate **-tha**.

37 The broadening of internal vowels – in this example, of 'i' to 'ea' – distinguishes the Strong Plural with final **-a** from the Weak Plural with final **-a**.

38 Agentives are performers of specific activities, e.g. fisherman, banker, swimmer.

39 Many of these denote abstract qualities or ideas, e.g. *cumhacht* 'power', *foisceacht* 'proximity', *filíocht* 'poetry'.

40 The 'o' is inserted because the 'í', being a long vowel, *cannot* be removed from the word for any reason. Only short vowels are expendable.

41 In a monosyllabic, a final long vowel is retained in the plural.

42 In a polysyllabic, a final long vowel is shortened in the plural.

43 See note 38.

44 An abstract noun denotes an abstract quality or idea, e.g. *treise* 'strength', *leisce* 'laziness', *laige* 'frailty'.

45 The dative singular of *Éire* is *Éirinn*.

46 *Fadó*, *fadó* in Berkeley, the late Professor Brendan O'Hehir (*Dia lena anam*) explained that *deirfiúr* derives from *derb* 'true' + *siúr* 'sister' ⇒ *derb* + *shiúr* ⇒ *deirfiúr* in order to distinguish between a sister who is a blood-relative and a sister who is a nun. Likewise, *deartháir* derives from *derb* 'true' + *bráthair* 'brother' ⇒ *derb* + *bhráthair* ⇒ *deartháir* in order to distinguish between a brother who is a blood-relative and a brother who is a monk.

47 Case in point: lenition of a noun in the genitive after a singular feminine noun in any case except the genitive. If you are curious about how numerous exceptions to a 'rule' can be, see 6(l) a-g on pp. 83-84 of *Gramadach na Gaeilge agus Litriú na Gaeilge: An Caighdeán Oifigiúil*.

48 In idioms that indicate location or condition, *ar* does not lenite the following noun, e.g. *ar fáil* 'available', *ar buile* 'furious', *ar tír* 'on land' (see also *ar* in *Lookalikes*).

49 This *a* 'to' derives from *do* 'to, for'.



50 *Idir* does *not* lenite when it is used in the sense ‘between, among’, e.g. *idir cairde* ‘between friends’, *idir crainn* ‘among trees’, as opposed to *idir chairde agus mhuintir* ‘both friends and family’, *idir chrainn agus thoir* ‘both trees and bushes’.

51 Lenition does not occur in combinations of ‘*thar* + noun alone’ that are adverbial in meaning (i.e. that describe anything except a noun). Most of these are common idioms, e.g. *thar barr* ‘excellent’, *thar sáile* ‘overseas’.

52 With the single exception of *fios* in the phrase *gan fios* ‘unknown’.

53 In some dialects *do* ‘your’ becomes *t’* before a noun with an initial vowel, yielding *t’oifig*.

54 Although they are not in the *Caighdeán*, dual forms (i.e. forms used only with the number ‘two’) exist for *bos* ‘palm of hand’, *cos* ‘foot, leg’, *cluas* ‘ear’, *lámh* ‘hand’, and *bróg* ‘boot’, and they look exactly like the distinctive dative singular: *dhá bhois* ‘two palms’, *dhá chois* ‘two feet/legs’, *dhá chluais* ‘two ears’, *dhá láimh* ‘two hands’, *dhá bhróig* ‘two boots’. They are still used in some dialects.

55 For the use of these numbers with *ceann* and other non-human nouns, see *Numbers: Cardinal*.

56 For use of these numbers with *cinn* and other non-human nouns, see *Numbers: Cardinal*.

57 *Except* nouns with initial ‘*d*’, ‘*t*’, or vowel.

58 In Ulster Irish it is customary to *lenite* a singular definite noun after these Simple Prepositions, but since there are comparatively few opportunities to eclipse, you should cherish every one of them.

### Part 3

1 Some polysyllabic adjectives with a final consonant undergo syncope before adding ‘*a*’ or ‘*e*’ in the plural and in the feminine genitive singular. They are listed at the end of this section.

2 The two exceptions, *breá* ‘fine’ and *te* ‘warm’, are discussed in *Adjectives: Third Declension*.

3 Most of these adjectives undergo syncope in the plural and in the feminine genitive singular.

4 This adjective undergoes syncope in the plural but *not* in the feminine genitive singular.

5 To relieve monotony, there are exceptions to this rule: *searbh* ‘bitter’, *mear* ‘quick’ and *tur* ‘dry’ do not inflect for the masculine genitive singular and neither do monosyllabic adjectives with two final consonants or final **-cht**. To prevent complacency, there are exceptions to these exceptions: *bocht* ‘poor’, *dall* ‘blind’, and *donn* ‘brown’ do inflect for the masculine genitive singular (*bhoicht*, *dhaill*, *dhoinn*).

6 A full list of the internal-vowel changes for First-Declension Adjectives qualifying a singular masculine noun can be found in ‘Formation of the Genitive Singular’, *Nouns: First Declension*.

7 A full list of the internal-vowel changes for First-Declension Adjectives qualifying a singular feminine noun can be found in ‘Formation of the Genitive Singular’, *Nouns: Second Declension*.

8 ‘Simple Preposition + *an* + Masculine Noun’ does *not* lenite an Attributive Adjective if the noun is eclipsed, but if it is lenited, so is the adjective, e.g. *Doirt an siúcra amach as an mbabhla mór* ‘Pour the sugar out of the big bowl’, but *doirt an siúcra amach as an bhabhla mhór*.

9 Simple Prepositions that lenite, lenite *indefinite* nouns, e.g. *ó chathair* ‘from a city’ but *ón gcathair* ‘from the city’.

10 Compound Prepositions lenite *definite* nouns, e.g. *ar aghaidh túir* ‘in front of a tower’ but *ar aghaidh thúr an chaisleáin* ‘in front of of the castle tower’, *os cionn cathrach* ‘above a city’ but *os cionn Chorcaí* ‘above Cork City’.

11 An Interrogative Pronoun inflects for the past tense but not for person, number, gender, or case (see *Interrogatives*).

12 The emphatic forms are presented in VI. below. Prepositional Pronouns are explained in *Prepositions: Prepositional Pronouns*.

13 This usage is fairly common for *timpeall* and *cois*, is limited to set phrases for *dála* and *fearacht*, e.g. *a dhála sin* ‘as in that instance’, *a fhearacht sin* ‘like that’, and does not occur with *trasna*.

14 Even though it consists of two words, *go dtí* ‘to, until’ is a Simple Preposition because the second word *dtí* derives from the Old Irish 3<sup>rd</sup> p. sg. present subjunctive of the verb *tar* ‘come’, whereas the second word of a Compound Preposition is a noun. In acknowledgement of *dtí*’s true verbal identity, *go dtí* is followed by a noun in the nominative case. Any mutations to the noun are caused by the Definite Article, not by *go dtí*. Note also that *go* and *go dtí* are not strictly interchangeable. When the object is definite, it is generally safer to use *go dtí*.

15 *Thar* lenites when it is followed by a definite noun, a proper noun, or a qualified noun, e.g. *thar Mheiriceá* ‘beyond America’, *thar bheirt againn* ‘more than two of us’.

16 This Simple Preposition is *faoi* in Connemara Irish, *fé* in Munster Irish, and *fá* in Ulster Irish; Dinneen also cross-references *fó* to *fá*. All other Prepositional Pronouns of *faoi/fé/fá* have the same forms as the *Caighdeán*.

17 *Chun* is sometimes used instead of *chuig*. The two words have different origins, which is why *chuig* takes a noun object in the dative case whereas *chun* takes a noun object in the genitive case.

18 If you are unfamiliar with verb tenses and moods, see *Verbs: Person, Number, Tense, Mood*. Note also that since *má<sup>L</sup>*, *dá<sup>E</sup>*, *mura<sup>E</sup>*, and *murar<sup>L</sup>* are subordinating conjunctions, if they are followed by an Irregular Verb the usual rules for use of dependent forms apply (see *Dependent Clauses: Indirect Speech*).



19 This is not a typo. After *má<sup>L</sup>*, the future tense of *bí* is conveyed by *bíonn* instead of *beidh*.

20 In a Dependent Clause the conditional and the past subjunctive are translated identically with the helping verb 'would'.

21 In *an gcanann an t-éan seo go moch?* 'does this bird sing early?' and *canann sé go mór moch* 'it sings very early' *go moch* is the last item because it is not qualifying anything. In the second sentence *mór* is the second-to-last item because it is qualifying *go moch*.

22 In this expression it is possible to substitute *ag* 'at' for *ar*.

23 The spelling of the dual case is identical to the spelling of the distinctive dative singular (see *The Dative Singular, Nouns: Second Declension*).

24 *Dara* can be substituted for *dóú* in Ordinal Numbers ending with 2.

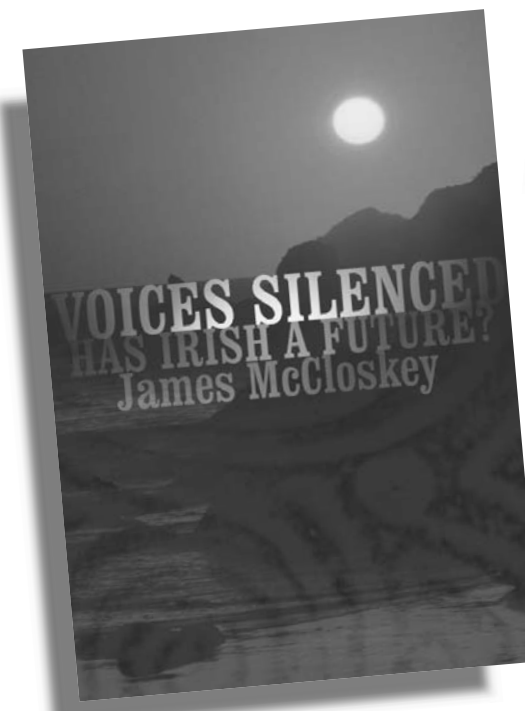
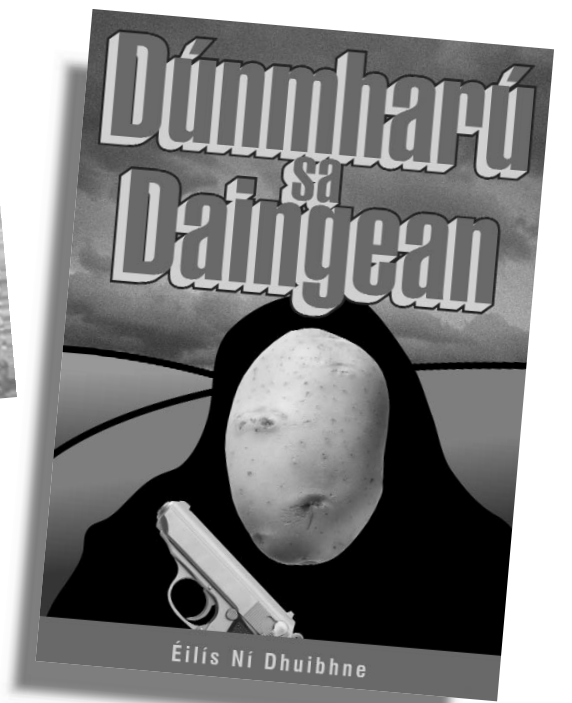
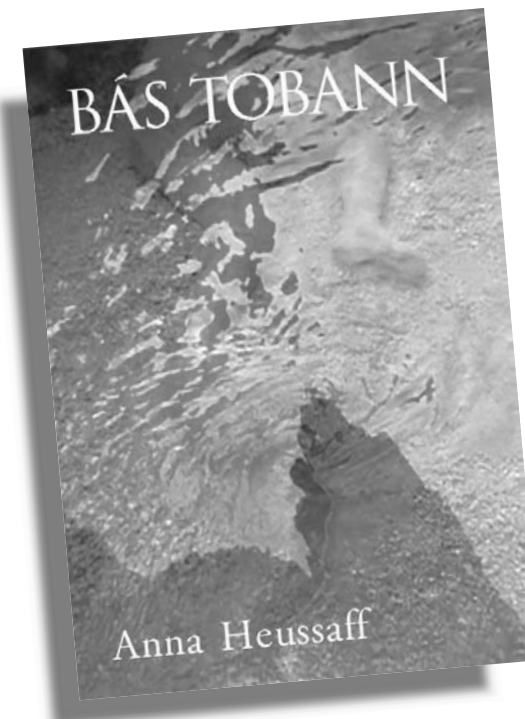
25 'Leath + noun' is also commonly used to create a compound word, the noun being in the N/A case and lenited by *leath*, e.g. *leathcháca meala* 'half a honey cake', *leathphióg úll* 'half an apple pie'.

26 When the fraction is a single part of the whole, *aon* 'one' may precede the fraction, e.g. *aon trian de cháca meala*.

27 In Munster Irish *cé acu* may be used for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> p. pl. as well as for the 3<sup>rd</sup> p. pl.

28 In Munster Irish the affirmative Indirect Relative Particle *a<sup>E</sup>/ar<sup>L</sup>* is frequently replaced by *go<sup>E</sup>/gur<sup>L</sup>*.

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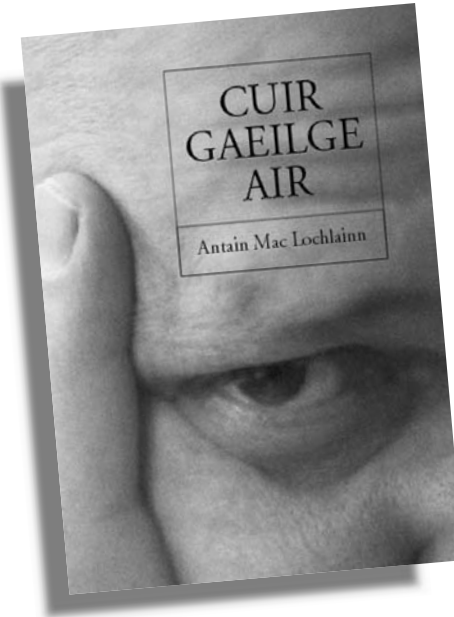
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