LESSON PLAN

Gender equality in politics

Learning outcome 3.10
Investigate how individuals or groups have used the law to bring about change in society

Students will learn

- About gender equality among elected representatives
- How gender quotas have influenced this
- About the local, national, European and global aspect of this issue

Materials

- Slide show
- Infographics: Women in Parliament – one copy, three infographics in total
- Worksheet 1: World café - Women in Parliament – one for each group, three in total
- Worksheet 2: Thoughts on gender equality in Irish politics – one for each student

Assessment for learning/Key skills

- Communicating
- Working with others
- Managing information and thinking
1 Recap – Gender equality Acts

SLIDES 3-4

Recap the Acts discussed in the lesson How laws change society. Focus on the Electoral Amendment (Political Funding) Act 2012 and the changes it is hoped it will bring about.

Note: The Act provided that political parties would face a cut of half their State funding if they did not have at least 30% women and 30% men candidates at the next general election. In the general election of 2016 all parties met the 30% threshold and a record number of women TDs were elected. The required proportion of women and men will increase to 40% from February 2023.

Ask students to consider the issue of gender balance among our elected representatives.

2 World café

SLIDE 5

Make three workstations, each with a different infographic on Women in Parliament (see pages 5-7).

Divide the class into three groups and give each group a copy of Worksheet 1: Women in Parliament (see page 8). Ask each group to go to one of the three workstations, read the infographic together, choose three facts which they find most interesting and write them into the worksheet.

After five minutes, ask students to move in a clockwise direction to the next workstation until each group has visited each station and completed their worksheet.

SLIDE 6

Ask students to read through the information they have gathered and summarise their thoughts on how gender equality in the Oireachtas has evolved since the 1918 general election. Invite students to summarise their findings in a format of their choice and report back to the class. Record the findings on the slide.
3 How to improve women’s representation in the Oireachtas

SLIDE 7
The Oireachtas Committee on Justice, Equality Defence and Women’s Rights Second Report on Women’s Participation in Politics, October 2009, identified the “Five Cs” that pose challenges to women’s participation in parliamentary politics internationally.

Note: To find out about the Committee’s recommendations, read the report: data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/32/joint_committee_on_justice_and_equality/reports/2009/2009-11-05_women-s-participation-in-politics_en.pdf

SLIDE 8
The National Women’s Council of Ireland commissioned a report on women’s representation on local councils in November 2019. It identified that:

- Only 28% of candidates in the 2019 local elections were women, and they won 24% of the seats
- Local government experience is a key step towards election to the Dáil, especially for women

Note: To find out about recommendations for increasing women’s representation in local government, read the report: www.nwci.ie/images/uploads/_NWCI_Research_Report_WEB.pdf

SLIDE 9
Brainstorm what can be done to improve gender equality among elected representatives in Ireland. Write the students’ ideas on the slide.

SLIDES 10-15
Outline some of the initiatives which are in place.

4 Worksheet 2: Thoughts on gender equality in Irish politics

SLIDE 16
Give each student a copy of Worksheet 2: Thoughts on gender equality in Irish politics (see page 9) and ask them to reflect individually on gender equality in Irish political life, past, present and future.
Extension activities

Choose another country and compare the number of female elected representatives with Ireland: [https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking](https://data.ipu.org/women-ranking)

Choose one of the initiatives outlined in Slides 10-15 and investigate it further.

Watch the Oireachtas TV documentary *In Our Own Words* and complete the worksheet.

**Note:** You could use the videos, podcasts and information on [www.oireachtas.ie/votail100](http://www.oireachtas.ie/votail100) as the basis for an extended study of gender and politics in Ireland. This could be particularly suitable as a project for transition year students.
WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT
PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN AND MEN ELECTED TO DÁIL ÉIREANN (1918-2018)

1918
1st Dáil
December 1918
1% 99%
1 Woman elected 104 Men elected

1981
22nd Dáil
June 1981
7% 93%
11 Women elected 155 Men elected

1992
27th Dáil
November 1992
12% 88%
20 Women elected 146 Men elected

2016
32nd Dáil
February 2016
22% 78%
35 Women elected 123 Men elected

December 2017
WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT
IMPACT OF GENDER QUOTAS
(ELECTION TO DÁIL ÉIREANN)

BEFORE QUOTAS

2011 ELECTION

FEMALE CANDIDATES

A

15% OF TOTAL CANDIDATES (566)

Labour 18 (26.5%) 5 (25%) 8 (18.6%) FINE GAEL 16 (15.4%) IND. 11 (14.7%) OTHER 19 (9.6%) (5.9%)

HIGHEST (%) LOWEST (%)

THRESHOLD

No party met 30% threshold

WOMEN ELECTED

25 WOMEN ELECTED TO DÁIL ÉIREANN (2011)

15% OF TOTAL (165) Excl. Ceann Comhairle

AFTER QUOTAS

2016 ELECTION

FEMALE CANDIDATES

A

30% OF TOTAL CANDIDATES (551)

Labour 6 (42.9%) 13 (42%) (42%) Fine Gael 13 (36.1%) (36%) (36%) IND. 18 (35%) OTHER 14 (31%) (31%) (31%) IND. 22 (30.8%) (30.8%) (30.8%) OTHER 8 (30.7%) (30.7%) (30.7%) IND. 27 (30%) (30%) (30%) OTHER 9 (20%) (20%) (20%)

HIGHEST (%) LOWEST (%)

THRESHOLD

All parties met 30% threshold

WOMEN ELECTED

22% WOMEN ELECTED TO DÁIL ÉIREANN (2016)

35 WOMEN ELECTED TO DÁIL ÉIREANN (2016)

22% OF TOTAL (157) Excl. Ceann Comhairle

With thanks to Dr. Fiona Buckley
(Department of Government and Politics, University College Cork)

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December 2017
WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT
TOTAL MEMBERS ELECTED
(1918-2018, BY GENDER)

DÁIL ÉIREANN
(MEMBERS / TDs)

MALE
1179
91%

FEMALE
114
9%

SEANAD ÉIREANN
(MEMBERS / SENATORS)

MALE
801
89%

FEMALE
99
11%

December 2017

With thanks to Seán Donnelly (Political Analyst)
Worksheet 1

World café
Women in Parliament

Write three interesting facts from each infographic.

Percentage of women and men elected to Dáil Éireann (1918-2018)
1. 

2. 

3. 

Total members elected (1918-2018, by gender)
1. 

2. 

3. 

Impact of gender quotas (Election to Dáil Éireann)
1. 

2. 

3. 

Worksheet 2

Thoughts on gender equality in Irish politics

Complete with an image, tweet, keywords or sentence.

Past

Present

Future