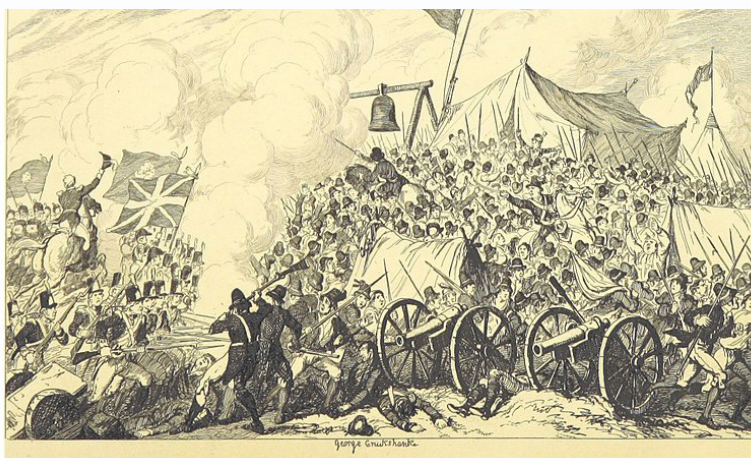


1798 Irish Rebellion

Comprehension Activity B

1798 Rebellion

The first clashes of the rebellion took place on 24th May 1798 in Dublin, quickly spreading to other parts of the country. The main areas that saw fighting were in Leinster and included Counties Dublin, Kildare, Meath and Wexford. In Co. Antrim and Co. Down, there were some skirmishes before the rising collapsed. In Connacht, a French contingent of 1,000 soldiers led by General Humbert, landed in Killala, Co. Mayo. Joined by 5,000 local forces, they had some initial success in Castlebar before being defeated in Ballinamuck in Co. Longford.



**Defeat of the Rebels at Vinegar Hill,
by George Cruikshank**

Wexford

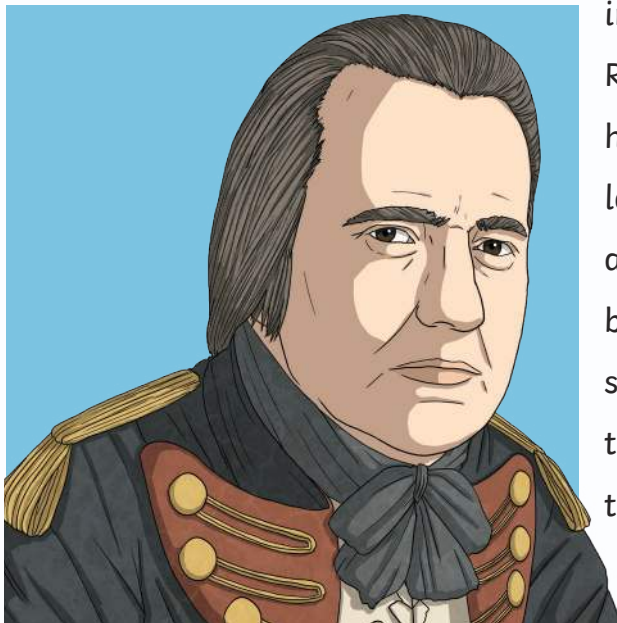
While it was quickly put down in most places, the rising found most success in Co. Wexford, despite there being fewer United Irishmen in that part of the country. The English sent soldiers to Wexford, searching for arms and arresting anyone who they suspected of being a United Irishman. Soldiers burned down homes, tortured and flogged people. After they burned down a church in Boolavogue the local people, led by their priest Father John Murphy marched to Enniscorthy armed with only

pikes and farming tools. In spite of their poor armoury, they succeeded in capturing the town from the English. The rebels then marched to Wexford town, which they also succeeded. When they next attacked New Ross and Arklow, they were badly beaten by the English and had to retreat to their camp on Vinegar Hill. Despite there being more Irish rebels than English soldiers, the soldiers were much better equipped than the rebels, having cannons and much better weapons such as muskets. The long-handled pikes of the Irish farmers were no match. The rebels held out for two hours before they were defeated and the leaders arrested and killed. Father John Murphy was captured and hanged.



Further French Intervention

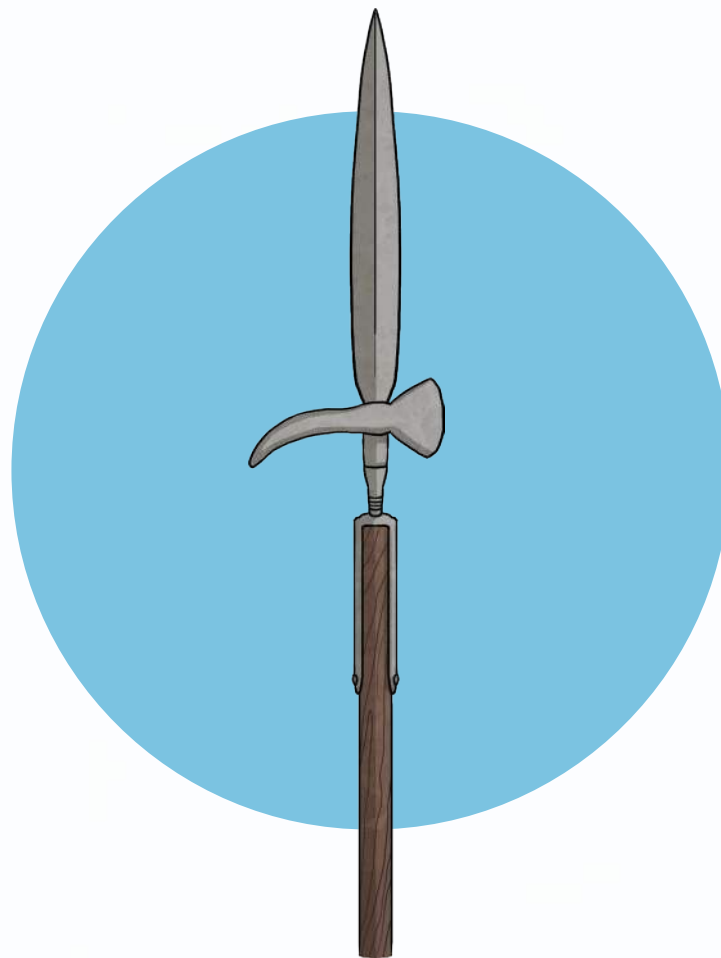
Following General Humbert's landing in Killala Co. Mayo in August 1798, a final French intervention was attempted in October 1798. This time, a 3,000 strong force of French soldiers, including Wolfe Tone himself, attempted to land at Lough Swilly



in Co. Donegal. They were met by a larger Royal Navy squadron and after a three-hour battle they surrendered, without ever landing in Ireland. Wolfe Tone was arrested and brought to Dublin, where he was tried by court-martial and found guilty. He was sentenced to death by hanging, but cheated the hangman's noose by slitting his own throat in his cell.

Aftermath

The 1798 Rebellion was poorly supported and not well organised. It lasted from 24th May – 12th October 1798, but in that short time approximately 30,000 people were killed, while others suffered immensely. Even though the rebellion was a failure, it frightened the British government that Ireland would again attempt to rebel and gain assistance from abroad. They decided to link Ireland to Great Britain through the 1801 Act of Union. This politically united the two islands under one parliament run from Westminster. This was very unpopular in Ireland as laws for Ireland were now passed by the parliament in London instead of Dublin. In the 1800s many people opposed the Act of Union, as they wanted self-government for Ireland. The union lasted until 1922 when Ireland gained independence from Britain.



Questions

1. List four areas where fighting took place during the 1798 Rebellion.

2. Where was the most success for the rebels during the 1798 Rebellion?

3. What priest led a group of rebels and where was his church located?

4. What was the first town that the rebels captured in Co. Wexford?

5. Where did the Wexford rebels retreat to when they were defeated in New Ross and Arklow?

6. What was one of the main reasons for the defeat in Wexford?

7. How many French soldiers were with Wolfe Tone and where did they attempt to land?

8. How many people were killed in the uprising?

9. Why did the uprising frighten the English so much?

10. What was the result of the 1798 rebellion and Ireland's relationship to Great Britain?

Thinking about the events of the 1798 Rebellion, answer the following:

- i) If you lived in Co. Wexford at this time, how do you think you would have reacted to the events?

- ii) Why, do you think, did the French help the Irish?

- iii) Do you think the Act of Union was a good thing for Ireland?

1798 Irish Rebellion Answers

1. List four areas where fighting took place during the 1798 Rebellion.
Wexford, Dublin, Kildare, Antrim, Meath, Down, Mayo and Longford.
2. Where was the most success for the rebels during the 1798 Rebellion?
Co. Wexford.
3. What priest led a group of rebels and where was his church located?
Father John Murphy of Boolavogue.
4. What was the first town that the rebels captured in Co. Wexford?
Enniscorthy.
5. Where did the Wexford rebels retreat to when they were defeated in New Ross and Arklow?
The camp at Vinegar Hill.
6. What was one of the main reasons for the defeat in Wexford?
The English had better weapons, including cannons and muskets while the rebels only had pikes and farm tools.
7. How many French soldiers were with Wolfe Tone and where did they attempt to land?
There were 3,000 French soldiers with Wolfe Tone and they attempted to land at Lough Swilly in Co. Donegal.
8. How many people were killed in the uprising?
Approximately 30,000.
9. Why did the uprising frighten the English so much?
The English feared another uprising where the Irish sought help again from abroad.
10. What was the result of the 1798 rebellion and Ireland's relationship to Great Britain?
The 1798 Rebellion led to the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland, which tied the islands into a political union.
11. Thinking about the events of the 1798 Rebellion, answer the following:
 - i. If you lived in Co. Wexford at this time, how do you think you would have reacted to the events?
Various answers
 - ii. Why, do you think, did the French help the Irish?
Various answers
 - iii. Do you think the Act of Union was a good thing for Ireland?
Various answers