

A HISTORY OF IRELAND IN 100 OBJECTS, A SELECTION LEAVING CERTIFICATE, ORDINARY AND HIGHER LEVEL HISTORY

Parnell silver casket, 1884



Where to see this object

National Museum of Ireland –
Decorative Arts and History, Collins
Barracks, Benburb Street, Dublin 7

[Click here to find out more](#)

Book a class trip to the museum

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CURRICULUM LINKS

Syllabus:	Leaving Certificate History, ordinary and higher levels
Field of study:	Later modern Irish history, 1815–1993
Topic:	2—Movements for political and social reform, 1870–1914 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perspective: Politics and administration• Element: The Home Rule movement: origins; development; leadership—Butt, Parnell, Redmond• Case study: The elections of 1885 and 1886; issues and outcomes• Key personality: Charles Stewart Parnell and his contribution to• developments in the Home Rule movement• Key concepts: Home Rule Separatism Political agitation

This lesson plan assumes that students have studied Parnell's work on the Land Question and the Home Rule Question.

Chronological summary of Parnell's career on The Parnell Society website <http://parnell society.com/csp.htm> and behind the 'Worksheets' button. This will refresh students' memory and will help contextualise the casket.

RESOURCES

- Photograph of the silver casket and other images, behind the 'Look' button.
- Extract from A history of Ireland in 100 objects, behind the 'Read' button.
- Worksheets behind the 'Worksheets' button.
- Publications:
 - Charles Stewart Parnell by F.S.L. Lyons (Fontana, 1978)
 - Charles Stewart Parnell by Alan O' Day (Dundalغان Press for the Historical Association of Ireland, 1998)
 - Enigma: A New Life of Charles Stuart Parnell by Paul Bew (Gill and Macmillan, 2011)

- Weblinks:
 - Dictionary of Irish Biography; on-site access facilitated through Scoilnet is now available to all schools via the Schools Broadband Network: <http://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/> Either go directly to the Dictionary of Irish Biography website (<http://dib.cambridge.org/>) or log in to Scoilnet (www.scoilnet.ie) and click on the 'Dictionary of Irish Biography' icon. Search for Charles Stewart Parnell and other key personalities.
 - Search for contemporaneous accounts of the topic's elements and case studies on the full Irish Times Archive, which goes back to 1859 and is freely available to all schools on the Schools Broadband Network. <http://www.pdsttechnologyineducation.ie/>
 - Scoilnet also provides a link. <https://www.scoilnet.ie/post-primary/the-irish-times-archive/>
 - The Parnell Society website: <http://parnellsociety.com/csp.htm>
 - History Ireland's article The 1885 and 1886 general elections in Ireland, by Professor Brian Walker, available at <http://www.historyireland.com/>
 - Search Scoilnet (<https://www.scoilnet.ie>) for resources on the topic's keywords.
 - Researcher's Handbook—Limerick City Library Millennium Project (2000) by Sinead McCoolle, available on the Limerick City Library website: <http://www.limerickcity.ie/Library/LocalStudies/ResearchersHandbook/>

LESSON AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Refer to the 'Lesson A&O' button for a comprehensive description of aims and objectives for the Leaving Certificate History syllabus.

LEARNING OUTCOMES—TOPICS FOR STUDY

Students at both levels should be able to:

- recall the main events of the element 'The Home Rule movement: origins; development; leadership—Butt, Parnell, Redmond' from the perspective of politics and administration, with particular reference to important changes identified therein, and show a basic understanding of the main causes and consequences;
- recognise that historical study is concerned not just with the powerful and influential but also with the ordinary and anonymous;
- recall the issues and events of the 'Elections of 1885 and 1886: issues and outcomes' case study, and be able to give a narrative account of these;
- look at a contentious or controversial issue from more than one point of view, with particular reference to the issues highlighted in the 'Elections of 1885 and 1886: issues and outcomes' case study; and
- describe in some detail the role of the key personality, Charles Stewart Parnell, in respect of the Home Rule movement, and address such aspects as: the manner in which he influenced, or was influenced by, the events described; whether Parnell was a participant in or witness to the events; and different contemporary attitudes toward Parnell.

Additional learning outcomes for higher level

Students should be able to:

- recall the main issues and events of the 'Home Rule movement: origins; development; leadership—Butt, Parnell, Redmond' element, with particular reference to important changes identified therein, and show a good understanding of the main causes and consequences;
- recall the issues and events of the 'Elections of 1885 and 1886: issues and outcomes' case study, and give a discursive account of these issues;

- evaluate the role of the key personalities, Charles Stewart Parnell and John Redmond, in relation to the main issues and events of the 'Home rule movement: origins; development; leadership—Butt, Parnell, Redmond' element; and
- show understanding of the relevance of the following key concepts of this element of the topic: Home Rule, separatism and political agitation.

LEARNING OUTCOMES—WORKING WITH EVIDENCE

These lessons will provide students with teaching and learning experience for documents-based study, and will prepare students for undertaking their own research study. Students should be able to:

- show understanding of the role of evidence in the writing of history. Understanding should encompass such aspects as: the difference between source and evidence, how the historian evaluates evidence, the fact that evidence may be open to more than one interpretation
- identify such different types of historical sources as eyewitness accounts, public records, memoirs, letters, maps, photographs and political cartoons
- interpret a range of historical sources of the types identified above and answer questions relating to their provenance, their purpose and their usefulness
- draw conclusions from historical sources and use these conclusions to help form judgements about historical issues
- display an awareness of objectivity in their own writing by striving to be fair-minded and unbiased
- develop awareness of the location of historical data in archives, libraries, museums and in sources increasingly available online with the growth in digital humanities
- appreciate the importance of using trusted sources, especially when doing research online.

Additional learning outcomes for higher level

Students should be able to:

- explain how the word 'history' is variously used to describe the past itself, surviving evidence from the past and written histories
- explain which types of historical sources are found in archives, libraries and museums
- identify the main strengths and limitations of different sources by asking appropriate questions relating to the purpose for which they were produced, the motives of the person(s) who produced them, their historical context and their relevance to the event(s) and issue(s) being studied
- recognise the provisional nature of historical knowledge—that written histories are an interpretation of available evidence and that new evidence may alter our historical understanding and
- show understanding of the broader historical context of research findings.

LESSON ONE

PARNELL SILVER CASKET, 1884

Display the image of Parnell silver casket without letting students know what it is.

Brainstorm by asking students to speculate about the object.

- What might it be?
- Who might have made it?
- What function or use might it have had?

Students are not expected to guess correctly at this stage. It is an exercise in enquiry, exploration and encouragement to offer evidence-based opinions. Please see Teacher's Note below for a description of and explanation about the object.

WORKSHEET 1 (BEHIND THE 'WORKSHEETS' BUTTON)

- Distribute the worksheet.
- Ask students to work in pairs to identify the different motifs on the casket and comment on their significance. Use the zoom facility on the Powerpoint to highlight motifs and ask questions to nudge students in the right direction.
- Get oral feedback from students. Expect answers such as Hibernia, wolfhound, parliamentary buildings, Kilmainham Gaol, shamrocks, round towers; all of which are symbols of Ireland, used by nineteenth century nationalist revivalists.
- Return to some of the brainstorming ideas. Ask again who might have produced the casket and why? Is it possible to glean the political persuasion of the person/s who made or commissioned it by examining its motifs?
- Ask students to answer the question on Worksheet 1:
 - Why might this casket have been presented to C.S. Parnell in 1884?
 - Students may use the sheet with the Chronological summary of Parnell's career from The Parnell Society website, available behind the 'Worksheets' button.

WORKSHEET 2 (BEHIND THE 'WORKSHEETS' BUTTON)

Group or pairs work. The list of 24 comments and statements on Parnell is to be cut into separate strips/cards by the teacher beforehand and given to each group of students in an envelope. Working in pairs, ask students to:

- read through the comments and statements about Parnell and decide with their partner whether they represent his strengths or weaknesses.
- place each of the comments/statements in the appropriate column, depending on whether they think it is an example of strength or weakness. If there is any indecision on a particular comment/statement, it can be placed along the dividing line in the middle, and students can wait to hear what others have to say about the point during feedback.
- give feedback to the whole class. Discussion might ensue, and this might help those who may have been undecided about where to place certain comments/statements.
- keep the completed worksheets for the next lesson.

(An alternative approach would be to print out the comments and statement sheet and have students underline strengths in blue and weaknesses in red.)

HOMWORK

Ask students to review the three phases of Parnell's political career (1875–82, 1882–89, 1890–91) and to note down five of his strengths and five of his weaknesses.

TEACHER'S NOTE

The Parnell silver casket, called a 'Freedom Box', was presented by 'the Nationalists of Drogheda' to Charles Stewart Parnell in 1884 in recognition of his achievements as leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Freedom boxes were a traditional means of honouring individuals in the political realm by reason of the political office they held or because of the service they were deemed to have rendered. As well as the box itself, recipients were granted the 'Freedom of the City', and the parchment document conferring that freedom was contained within the box. In the eighteenth century, this honour carried significant benefits, such as the allowance to trade, to vote in municipal elections and to pasture sheep on common ground within the city boundaries, for example on St Stephen's Green in Dublin. By the nineteenth century, however, the 'Freedom of the City' was a purely ceremonial honour.

The freedom box presented to Parnell has a roof-like lid, on which are the figures of a wolfhound and Hibernia; other favoured designs and motifs emblematical of Ireland that were adopted in the nineteenth century and popularised by the Irish revivalist movement appear elsewhere on the casket. There are interlaced designs and Irish motifs such as shamrock, round towers and wolfhounds at each corner. At the front there is an image of the former Parliament building near Trinity College, Dublin (today a Bank of Ireland building), in keeping with the fact that the primary political object of the Irish Parliamentary Party, and of Parnell, was Home Rule for Ireland; before the Act of Union (1800), the Irish parliament was housed here. In the late nineteenth century the building was used by constitutional nationalists as a symbol for Irish Home Rule. Kilmainham Gaol (Dublin) is pictured on the left at the front of the casket; Parnell was imprisoned there for a time between 1881 and 1882.

LESSON TWO

PARNELL SILVER CASKET, 1884

DEBATE

Introduce the motion for debate 'Parnell as a political leader had more strengths than weaknesses'.

- This task draws on students' homework and the results of their classwork on Worksheet 1 from Lesson one.
- Hold an initial vote on the motion and record the result (for, against, undecided).
- When students are asked to vote again on the motion, it will be possible to see if any have been swayed by the material they encountered and discussed in the earlier lesson.
- Using the completed worksheets from the previous lesson, ask students to decide whether they support or oppose the motion. They should substantiate their view using evidence they have accumulated on the previous lesson's worksheet and their homework notes.
- Get feedback at this point.
- Ask students to give specific reasons for their decisions.
- Ask students who support the motion to gather on one side of the room and those who oppose it to gather on the other.
- Each side must nominate three speakers - proposer, second speaker and summariser. (Use British parliamentary style debate so that all students will be involved in the debate via the 'points of information' process).
- Students nominated as speakers should prepare their debate speeches.
- Students who are not a proposer, second speaker or summariser should have points of information ready. All students will be required to take part in the debate in some capacity.
- After both sides have presented their arguments, hold a final vote and note any swayed viewpoints.
- The lesson materials might also be used to stimulate a discussion on the technique for Leaving Certificate higher level questions.

HOMEWORK

Students should adapt their work to answer the Leaving Certificate higher level question: 'What were Parnell's strengths and weaknesses as a political leader?' (100 marks).

ASSESSMENT

Students' written work to be formatively assessed by the teacher.