

WORKSHEET

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

Parnell silver casket, 1884

Chronological summary of Parnell's career available on the Parnell Society website:

<http://parnellociety.com/csp.htm>

1846	Born in Avondale House, Co. Wicklow, 4th son of John Henry Parnell and Delia (nee Stewart of Bordentown, New Jersey, USA)
1859	Father dies suddenly. Parnell children are made Wards of Court
1865–9	Attends Magdalene College Cambridge but does not take degree; 1867 Parnell comes of age and is the legal owner of Avondale House
1874	Serves as High Sheriff of Co. Wicklow and is active in the local gentry
1874	Stands as Home Rule Parliamentary candidate for Co. Dublin but is defeated.
1875	April 22 Takes his seat in Parliament after winning in Co. Meath.
1876	Joins the Amnesty Association to seek the release of Fenian prisoners.
1877	Parnell identifies with the radical Irish 'obstructionist' wing of the Home Rule party.
1877	Elected President of the Irish Home Rule Confederation
1878	Michael Davitt and Parnell collaborate to push for sweeping land reform
1879	October 21 Irish National Land League established. The first phase of the 'Land War'
1879–80	Visits the United States with John Dillon. They collect £60,000 for poor relief in Ireland. Parnell addresses the U.S Congress—the first Irishman to be so honoured.
1880	Wins three constituency seats in parliament and chooses to represent Cork City. In May is elected as Chairman of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Parnell first meets Mrs Katharine O'Shea in July. The Land War intensifies, with agrarian disturbances and 'boycotts'. In November Parnell and thirteen others are charged with seditious conspiracy but the case collapses.
1881	Secret relationship with Mrs O'Shea blossoms. Parnell and the Irish Party M.P.s in frequent clashes in parliament over coercion in Ireland. In April a reforming Land bill grants the '3 F's'—Fair rent, Free sale and Fixture of Tenancy. In October Parnell and leading Land Leaguers are interned in Kilmainham Jail.
1880–82	The Ladies' Land League active under Anna and Fanny Parnell.
1882	The 'Kilmainham Treaty', under which Parnell trades stability in the countryside for further land reforms. In May the Phoenix Park murders of Lord Cavendish and Under Secretary Burke. In October the Irish National League is founded to campaign for Home Rule.

- 1883 The Parnell Tribute. A public collection of £38,000 presented to Parnell.
- 1885 Parnell, now undisputed leader of 85 Irish M.Ps, reiterates Irish Home rule aspirations in his famous Cork speech 'No man has the right to say to his country "thus far shalt thou go and no further"'.
- 1886 First reading of the Irish Home Rule Bill introduced by W.E. Gladstone, Liberal Prime Minister. Defeated by 341 to 311 votes. The defeat brings down the Liberal government. In July Parnell and the Irish Party are returned with 85 seats . The Plan of Campaign is introduced but is not welcomed by Parnell.
- 1887 **March 7** 'Parnellism and Crime', the first in a series of allegations published in The Times newspaper that Parnell and his followers were directly involved in agrarian crime and had prior knowledge of the Phoenix Park murders.
- 1889 The Special Commission of enquiry into Parnellism and Crime finds that much of the 'evidence' has been forged by an ex Fenian, Richard Pigott. Parnell is exonerated and is invited by Gladstone to construct a new Irish Home Rule Bill. In December, Captain William O'Shea petitions for a divorce citing Parnell as co-respondent.
- 1890 In November Captain O'Shea is granted a divorce after Parnell refuses to contest .Gladstone announces that he will no longer accept Parnell as leader, November 25. The Parnell Split occurs after acrimonious meetings in Committee Room 15 in the House of Commons in December. There is also strong clerical opposition growing in Ireland to Parnell. The Party divides on the issue of Parnell's continued leadership, with the majority of M.Ps abandoning him. Later in the month Parnell's faction loses a by-election in Kilkenny to an anti-Parnellite. Parnell is injured during the Campaign.
- 1891 Throughout January and February a group of M.Ps led by William O'Brien and John Dillon attempt to heal the party divisions at talks with Parnell in Boulogne, France, but without success. In June, Parnell is publicly accused of stealing party funds and loses two more by-elections. Parnell and Katharine marry at Steyning Registry Office near Brighton. Throughout the late summer Parnell campaigns fiercely to rebuild his party. On Sunday, September 27, he gives his last public address at Creggs in Co. Galway. Gravely ill and exhausted he returns to Brighton.
- 1891 **October 6** Charles Stewart Parnell dies in Brighton, aged 45.

Why might this casket have been presented to C.S. Parnell in 1884?

WORKSHEET 2

PARNELL SILVER CASKET, 1884

While the Drogheda nationalists were clearly keen to celebrate Parnell's achievements, our aim is to assess Parnell's career as a political leader and assess his successes and failures. Was he a 'prophet outcast with the Promised Land in sight' or 'strong to the verge of weakness'? Complete the following tasks to help you decide.

Read through the 24 comments and statements about Parnell and decide whether they identify his strengths or weaknesses.

Place each of the 24 points in the appropriate column, depending on whether you think it is an example of success/strength or weakness. If you cannot agree on whether a particular point is a success or weakness, place it along the dividing line in the middle and wait to hear views from other students during feedback.

Examples of Parnell's successes/strengths	Examples of Parnell's weaknesses

COMMENTS AND STATEMENTS ON PARNELL

Option 1: Underline successes/strengths in blue, and weaknesses in red.

1. Parnell used the Land Movement and its mass appeal to gain control of the Home Rule party. He also brought the movement under the control of the party and weakened Fenian influence.
2. He failed to achieve Home Rule and after the defeat of the Home Rule Bill the party had lost its political freedom at Westminster.
3. Parnell was clever to tailor his speeches to the audience he was addressing. This tactic aimed at maintaining his popular base, both in Ireland and America, and to keep his movement united.
4. He was able to present to Britain the image of a people united in a common aim behind his leadership.
5. Parnell's greatest flaw was the O'Shea liaison that Bew calls 'reckless in the extreme'. In not contesting the divorce case he put his whole political career on the line.
6. His creation of a disciplined, pledge-bound party organised by a party machine in each constituency was a great achievement. This made Home Rule a practical political possibility. It forced the two main British parties to acknowledge that there was now a third force in politics that could decide who held power in Britain as a whole.
7. Like so many Irish nationalists he never came close to developing a constructive policy towards the northern Protestants, or a strategy to deal with their determined opposition to the idea of Irish self-government.
8. The conversion of Gladstone and the Liberals to Home Rule was a great political success.
9. There was no alternative to the alliance with the Liberals. This was a new political reality that Parnell failed to recognise during the divorce scandal.
10. The strength of his movement meant that the economic and social problems in Ireland could not be ignored. The Conservatives and Unionists realised that constructive policies would be needed if the demand for Home Rule was to be defeated.
11. He was a victim of his own strengths during the scandal—his iron will, pride and determination to fight on. These qualities reinforced a stubborn refusal to recognise political reality, e.g. his Manifesto to the People of Ireland and his rejection of mediation at Boulogne.
12. His goal of domestic self-government as a solution to the Irish Question may never have been achieved, but he ensured that the desire for self-government was a political reality.
13. Parnell brought Home Rule to centre stage in Westminster and made it a realistic and viable solution to the problems of Anglo-Irish relations.
14. Parnell demonstrated that constitutional nationalism could achieve more than revolutionary nationalism.
15. Parnell underestimated the strength of Unionist opposition to Home Rule.

16. Parnell ultimately split the Irish Parliamentary Party (and the Liberal Party).
17. Parnell's affair with Kitty O'Shea led to absences from parliament and from Ireland.
18. Parnell was instrumental in two failed Home Rule Bills (1886 and 1893).
19. The Piggott Forgeries, *The Times* letters smear campaign of 1887, ultimately failed.
20. The Catholic Church withdrew its support for the Irish Parliamentary Party in 1890.
21. Parnell's and Davitt's work with the Land League in 1879–81 (they established it as a national organisation, they raised funds in America, etc.) led Gladstone's government to introduce a new Land Act in 1881 granting the 'Three F's' and making loans available to tenants who wished to buy their own holdings.
22. The violence of the Land campaign, and the murders that followed, did much to discredit Irish nationalism, and were never adequately condemned by Parnell.
23. Within Ireland, the attitude of Unionists and landlords was hardened by the National League campaign, which also led to the policy of coercion and further division.
24. Parnell's attempts to unite different factions led to some distrust, and this was compounded by the campaign of disruption in parliament, while his willingness to deal with both the Liberal and Tory parties may well have contributed to the failure of Home Rule in 1886.

COMMENTS AND STATEMENTS ON PARNELL

Option 2: Print and cut out each extract individually, and classify as successes/strengths or weaknesses.

EXTRACT 1

Parnell used the Land Movement and its mass appeal to gain control of the Home Rule party. He also brought the movement under the control of the party and weakened Fenian influence.

EXTRACT 2

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EXTRACT 3

Parnell was clever to tailor his speeches to the audience he was addressing. This tactic aimed at maintaining his popular base, both in Ireland and America and to keep his movement united.

EXTRACT 4

He was able to present to Britain the image of a people united in a common aim behind his leadership

EXTRACT 5

Parnell's greatest flaw was the O'Shea liaison that Bew calls "reckless in the extreme." In not contesting the divorce case he put his whole political career on the line.

EXTRACT 6

His creation of a disciplined, pledge-bound party organised by a party machine in each constituency was a great achievement. This made Home Rule a practical political possibility. It forced the two main British parties to acknowledge that there was now a third force in politics that could decide who held power in Britain as a whole.

EXTRACT 7

Like so many Irish nationalists he never came close to developing a constructive policy towards the northern Protestants, or a strategy to deal with their determined opposition to the idea of Irish self-government.

EXTRACT 8

The conversion of Gladstone and the Liberals to Home Rule was a great political success.

EXTRACT 9

There was no alternative to the alliance with the Liberals. This was a new political reality that Parnell failed to recognise during the divorce scandal.

EXTRACT 10

The strength of his movement meant that the economic and social problems in Ireland could not be ignored. The Conservatives and Unionists realised that constructive policies would be needed if the demand for Home Rule was to be defeated.

EXTRACT 11

He was a victim of his own strengths during the scandal—his iron will, pride and determination to fight on. These qualities reinforced a stubborn refusal to recognise political reality, e.g. his Manifesto to the People of Ireland and his rejection of mediation at Boulogne.

EXTRACT 12

His goal of domestic self-government as a solution to the Irish Question may never have been achieved, but he ensured that the desire for self-government was a political reality.

EXTRACT 13

Parnell brought Home Rule to centre stage in Westminster and made it a realistic and viable solution to the problems of Anglo-Irish relations.

EXTRACT 14

Parnell demonstrated that constitutional nationalism could achieve more than revolutionary nationalism.

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Parnell underestimated the strength of Unionist opposition to Home Rule

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The Piggott Forgeries, *The Times* letters smear campaign of 1887, ultimately failed.

EXTRACT 20

The Catholic Church withdrew its support for the Irish Parliamentary Party in 1890.

EXTRACT 21

Parnell's and Davitt's work with the Land League in 1879–81 (they established it as a national organisation, they raised funds in America, etc.) led Gladstone's government to introduce a new Land Act in 1881 granting the 'Three F's' and making loans available to tenants who wished to buy their own holdings.

EXTRACT 22

The violence of the Land campaign, and the murders that followed, did much to discredit Irish nationalism, and were never adequately condemned by Parnell.

EXTRACT 23

Within Ireland, the attitude of Unionists and landlords was hardened by the National League campaign, which also led to the policy of coercion and further division.

EXTRACT 24

Parnell's attempts to unite different factions led to some distrust, and this was compounded by the campaign of disruption in parliament, while his willingness to deal with both the Liberal and Tory parties may well have contributed to the failure of Home Rule in 1886.