

 SCHOLASTIC

Book Fairs

Supporting Reading Schools

THE GUNS OF EASTER

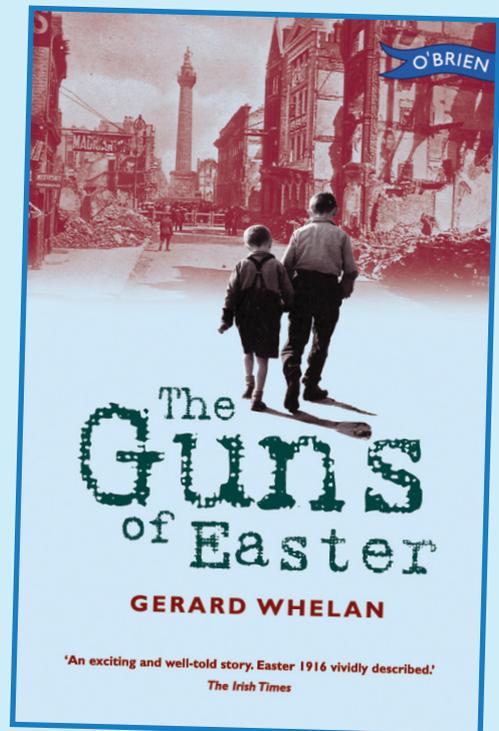
By Gerard Whelan

A Thematic Guide by Valerie King

The Guns of Easter is a historical children's novel. Based on the events of the 1916 Easter Rising, the novel centres around a young boy and his brave dash across Dublin in search of food, on the day of the rising.

Jimmy Conway is twelve years old. In this novel, we travel with him on his terrifying and treacherous journey across Dublin city, in a perilous search of food for his family. Jimmy's family are destitute, and living in the slums. His family are desperate, and so he takes equally desperate measures.

This novel explores the social and economic issues in Dublin at the time, as well as the Easter Rising.



THE GUNS OF EASTER

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This book is suitable for reading with 5th and 6th class. It deals with many themes, which will be explored in this guide.

This guide will provide teaching ideas for seven subjects of the curriculum, excluding Irish, maths, PE and science.

English:

Strand: Oral Language:

Strand Unit: Competence and confidence in using language, receptiveness to language, developing cognitive abilities through language.

Debate:

1. The children will have a debate about the 1916 rising. Were the leaders correct/incorrect to organise the rebellion?
2. Was the rebellion successful?
3. Was Jimmy brave, or foolish?

Discussion:

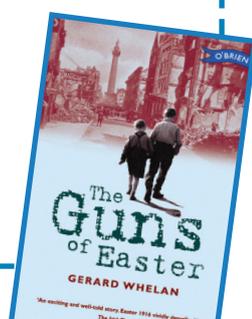
The teacher will lead a discussion based on life in Dublin in the tenements in 1916. How is it different to life today?

How is Dublin, as portrayed in the story, different to Dublin today?

How do you think the Irish volunteers felt as they stormed the GPO?

Reading:

The children will read the novel with the teacher. They will also learn the new vocabulary in the novel. E.g. rebellion, rising, guerrilla, warfare, volunteers, political.



Writing:

The children will complete the following tasks:

A newspaper recount of the events of the rising. I.E. who was involved, where it took place, when it took place, why it took place and the aftermath. The children will explore old newspaper cuttings of the Easter rising to assist them in this task.

A diary entry written by:

Jimmy

Jimmy's father

Jimmy's uncle

A soldier

A leader of the Rising

Creative writing:

The children will write a narrative based on the events of the day of the Rising. The children will tell the story through the lens of a soldier in the GPO.

Poetry:

The children will write an acrostic poem using the words 'Easter Rising', relating to the rebellion.

The children will write a poem to express how they feel about the Easter Rising.

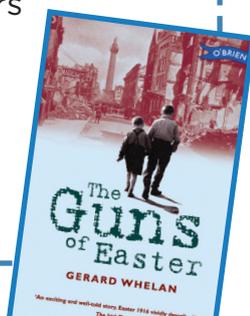
The children will write a cinquain poem based on the Easter Rising.

Novel Quotes:

The children will respond to the following quotes:

'Jimmy Conway had often made this journey in the dark, he preferred it, because you couldn't see the shabbiness and dirt'

'It was strange and deserted at this side of the Green. A line of tram cars stood abandoned in a nearby street. Jimmy saw nobody moving. This was a dangerous place.'



Letter writing:

Write a letter from Jimmy to his father, describing the events of the past few days in which he made his dash across Dublin.

Character Profile:

Make a profile of Jimmy - exploring the type of person he is. (Descriptive adjectives on outside of the sketch, personal adjectives on the inside of the sketch).

Guess the Quote:

The teacher will call out quotes from the book and the children will try to remember and correctly state who said each quote.

History:

Strand: *Eras of change and conflict*

Strand: *Stories*

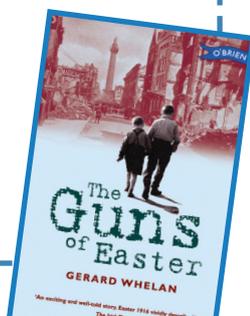
Strand: *Politics, conflict and society*

The children will explore eras of change and conflict. The children will explore eras of change as we explore how Dublin and housing in Dublin has changed since 1916, e.g. the tenements where Jimmy and his friends live, the accurate description of their sparse and bare apartment, the one treasure they had (the clock) in comparison to what we have today.

The children will explore eras of conflict as we explore the events in history which lead to the Rising taking place. The children will explore the conflict which took place on the day, and the effect it had on the people and the businesses in Dublin. We will discuss the parts in the novel which had conflict present, and how it was resolved.

The children will explore the era of politics and society at the time: the children will delve into this through examining the wider politics at play, and the people involved.

The children will write a fact file about the leaders of the Rising.



The children will write a letter to Jimmy asking him about his journey through Dublin during the Rising.

The children will write a letter to Jimmy's dad asking why he joined the British army.

The children will complete a timeline of Jimmy's journey across the city.

ART:

Drawing:

The children will draw silhouettes of the soldiers marching to the GPO.

Fabric and Fibre:

The children will create a collage of the Easter Rising. They will use a picture of the GPO as the centre point for the collage, using fabric and fibre for the rest, e.g. fire, gun shots, bullets, soldiers, looting etc.

Construction:

The children will create dioramas of the GPO when it was occupied by the volunteers. They will use recyclable materials to make their dioramas.

Paint and colour:

The children will design and paint a flag for the citizen army.

Drawing:

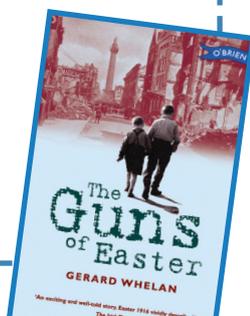
The children will design a movie release poster for the film of the book *The Guns of Easter*.

The children will design a new book cover for *The Guns of Easter*.

Drama:

The children will re-enact various scenes from the novel, from different chapters.

The children will take part in a conscience alley game. One child will be chosen to be Jimmy. The other children either side of him will help him decide whether he should or should not go in search of food for his family. Jimmy will make his decision at the end of the game.



Freeze Framing:

The children will freeze frame various parts of the story - when Jimmy sees the old man dying, when Jimmy sees his friend being shot, when the soldier helps Jimmy cross the bridge etc. The children must try to guess which scene in the book each group are depicting.

Improvisation:

The children will take part in a dramatic activity based on the final chapter of the novel. They will perform it for the rest of the school.

GEOGRAPHY:

Natural Environments:

The children will map out Jimmy's two journeys using their atlases. They will then draw a map showing these journeys.

Human Environments:

The children will explore human environments strand through exploring the homes of the time (tenements Jimmy lived in) in comparison to homes in Dublin today.

SPHE:

Strands:

Myself strand units: self-identity, self-awareness, feelings and emotions, personal safety, making decisions

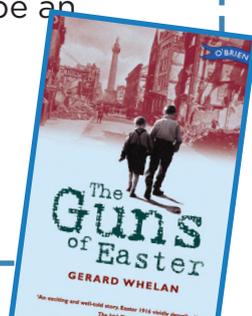
Myself and Others: strand units: relating to others - resolving conflict

Myself and the Wider World: developing citizenship

The children will discuss the emotions Jimmy felt as he made the journey across Dublin. We will discuss how Jimmy changed from the beginning to the end of the novel.

The children will write a diary from Jimmy's point of view discussing how different he felt after the Rising. E.g. he felt more mature, older, wiser, braver etc.

The children will take part in a conflict resolution game. One child will be an Irish soldier and one child will be a British soldier. The other children will give suggestions to each child to help resolve the conflict.



The children will have a debate on citizenship, e.g. how do we ensure we are good citizens, how can we be good citizens, was Jimmy's dad a good citizen when he joined the British army?

Were the rebels being good citizens when they organised the Rising?

MUSIC:

Song singing:

The children will learn the Irish rebel song 'A Nation Once Again' and 'Only Our Rivers Run Free'.

Composing:

The children will sing the first half of the Irish proclamation to the tune of a popular pop song of their choosing.

