



Lesson Series

1. An Introduction to Northern Ireland
2. Visiting Northern Ireland
3. Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and the partition
4. The Giant's Causeway
5. The Marble Arch Caves
6. Assessment

National Curriculum Coverage

Locational and Place Knowledge

- name and locate counties and cities of the United Kingdom, geographical regions and their identifying human and physical characteristics, key topographical features (including hills, mountains, coasts and rivers), and land-use patterns; and understand how some of these aspects have changed over time

What you need to know

- Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom. It is physically located within the island of Ireland, but is politically separate from the Republic of Ireland. There are six counties in Northern Ireland: Fermanagh, Tyrone, Londonderry, Armagh, Antrim and Down.
- Belfast is the capital, the largest city and the most industrialised part of Northern Ireland. Belfast is particularly famous for producing textiles and shipbuilding (Titanic). Important industries are in Belfast such as engineering and electronics. Londonderry is the second biggest city and one of the oldest inhabited places in Ireland with famous city walls to protect the city in the 17th century. Lisburn is best known its very high-quality linen, and the city is known as the birthplace of the Irish Linen Industry, established in 1698. Fibres from the flax plant are spun and then woven together to make linen.
- The climate is similar to that of Scotland; it is temperate and humid and has high levels of rainfall due to the Atlantic Ocean as well as high ground. Some crops are grown, however due to the climate, most upland areas are used for animal farming.
- There are two main upland areas in Northern Ireland; Sperrin Mountains in the west and Mourne Mountains in the south east. The highest mountain in Northern Ireland, Slieve Donard, is located within the Mourne Mountains and was formed from granite rock.
- Lough Neagh is the largest lake in the British Isles, at twenty miles long and nine miles wide. It is used for recreation and drinking water for many people in Northern Island. According to an old Irish legend, the lake was formed when a giant called Finn MacCool scooped up the land and threw it into the sea, creating Lough Neagh and the Isle of Man.
- Many people in Northern Ireland originate from Scotland and are known as Ulster-Scots. Ulster-Scots are mainly Protestants but the Gaelic Irish community were mainly Catholic. In 1922, the Republic of Ireland was partitioned from Northern Ireland. Communities in Northern Ireland still disagree about the decision to remain in the United Kingdom. Unionists want to remain part of Britain whereas Nationalists want to become part of the Irish nation.
- The Marble Arch Caves are a natural limestone cave system formed by an underground river and are over seven miles long.
- The most famous physical feature in Northern Ireland is the Giant's Causeway which is a landscape of rock columns made from basalt. Although each column is small, together they create thousands of steps down from the surrounding cliffs into the sea. It was created by an ancient volcanic eruption. Legend says that the giant Finn MacCool built it as part of a causeway connecting Ireland with Scotland so he could walk across the sea and fight another giant.
- The Ring of Gullion is a geological formation and an area that has been defined as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is located in County Armagh.



Teacher Knowledge

The northern area of Ireland is called Northern Ireland and is part of the United Kingdom. It is geographically joined to, but politically separate from the Republic of Ireland. There are six counties in Northern Ireland: Fermanagh, Tyrone, Londonderry, Armagh, Antrim and Down. Belfast is the capital, the largest city and the most industrialised part of Northern Ireland. Londonderry is the second biggest city and one of the oldest inhabited places in Ireland with famous city walls that protected the city in the 17th century. Lough Neagh is the largest lake in the British Isles, being twenty miles long and nine miles wide. It is used for recreation and drinking water for many people in Northern Ireland. According to an old Irish legend, the lake was formed when a giant called Finn MacCool scooped up the land and threw it into the sea, creating Lough Neagh and the Isle of Man. Northern Ireland's principle industries are textiles, shipbuilding, engineering and agriculture. The agriculture sector benefits from rich farming soil. Agriculture contributes to manufacturing through processing of livestock and dairy products. The climate is mild as a result of Atlantic Ocean breezes and the Gulf Stream, with comfortable summers and temperate winters. There are two main upland areas in Northern Ireland; Sperrin Mountains in the west and Mourne Mountains in the south east. The highest mountain in Northern Ireland, Slieve Donard, is in the Mourne Mountains and formed from granite rock. The famous writer C.S Lewis and poet Seamus Heaney are from Northern Ireland.

Knowledge Objective

To identify the key features of Northern Ireland.

Knowledge Goals

Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom.

Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland and is the largest city.

Lough Neagh is the largest lake in the British Isles.

Lesson Detail

Prior Learning: Which areas of the United Kingdom have we looked at so far this year? What do you already know about Northern Ireland?

Vocabulary: Recap the difference between Ireland and Island. (From KS1) Introduce Knowledge Organiser.

Teach: The North Channel separates Northern Ireland from Scotland to the east. England and Wales lie across the Irish Sea, to the east and southeast. Northern Ireland has a population of 1.8 million. Show children a map of Ireland, teach children that Northern Ireland is a part of the UK and that it is separate from the Republic of Ireland. Explain that Northern Ireland is split into counties; Fermanagh, Tyrone, Londonderry, Armagh, Antrim and Down. Teach children that Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland and lies in county Antrim. The Northern Irish Parliament buildings are called Stormont. Although Northern Ireland is part of the UK it makes its own laws. The second largest city in Northern Ireland is Londonderry which is also in the county of Londonderry. It is one of the oldest inhabited places in Ireland with famous city walls that were built to protect the city in the 17th century. Show a picture of the city walls. Lough Neagh is the largest lake in the British Isles, being twenty miles long and nine miles wide – it is used for recreation and drinking water for many people in Northern Ireland. According to an old Irish legend, the lake was formed when a giant called Finn MacCool scooped up the land and threw it into the sea, creating Lough Neagh and the Isle of Man.

Talk task: With your partner, turn to page 16 of the Oxford Schools Atlas. Locate Loch Neagh. On page 18, locate the Isle of Man.

Task: Label a map of Northern Ireland using page 16 of the atlas to help you.

Step for Depth: Use page 27 of the Oxford Schools Atlas, *how might people travel between Northern Ireland & the rest of the UK?*

Partner teach/Plenary: *What can you tell me about Northern Ireland?*

Vocabulary

- Ireland
- Belfast
- counties
- Londonderry
- Lough Neagh
- Finn MacCool

Suggested Resources

Oxford Schools Atlas, blank map of Northern Ireland



Teacher Knowledge

Northern Ireland is the smallest country in the United Kingdom, situated on the second largest island of the British Isles. It occupies one-sixth of the island it shares with the independent Republic of Ireland. Northern Ireland is composed of six of the twenty-nine counties of Ireland, covering about 5,452 square miles (14,120 square kilometres). It is separated from the Republic of Ireland by a three-hundred-mile-long artificial boundary. The entire island is bordered on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, on the east by the Irish Sea, and on the south by the Celtic Sea. Northern Ireland's capital city is Belfast. Belfast was home to the world's greatest shipbuilders, Harland & Wolff, that build the largest and most luxurious ships the world had ever seen which included the Titanic. Lisburn is Northern Ireland's third largest city and is also known as the birthplace of Ireland's linen industry, which was established in 1698. Bushmills is a small village near to the Giants Causeway, it is famous for producing whiskey. The village is very old fashioned, and people visit to see the style of the shops. Visitors can take a train along the Bushmills Railway to the Giants Causeway.

Knowledge Objective

To know Northern Ireland is a popular tourist destination.

Knowledge Goals

People visit Northern Ireland to see areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland and is a popular city for visitors.

The Giant's Causeway is located in Northern Ireland.

Lesson Detail

Prior Learning: What are human geographical features? What are physical geographical features? Can you remember a physical geographical feature of Northern Ireland? (Loch Neagh)

Vocabulary: Introduce the word 'tourism' and explain it refers to the organisation of holidays and visits to places of interest. Explain tourism is important as it brings money to regions when people visit and spend.

Teach: Discuss the key features of Northern Ireland – reflect on those taught and use the information they found in the atlases last lesson. Explain that many people visit Northern Ireland as there are several areas of natural beauty. One famous place of interest is the Giants Causeway; naturally occurring rock columns that were a result of an ancient volcanic eruption. (Children will learn more about this in lesson 4) Explain that Belfast was the home of a famous shipbuilding company who built the Titanic. The Titanic was a very famous ship that sadly sunk on its first voyage as it hit an iceberg. There is a visitor centre where people can learn about the Titanic. Locate Lisburn (near to Belfast) on a map and explain that a long time ago, people made linen there and the town became known for making linen and trading it. Show an image of linen. Locate Bushmills on a map (near to the Giants Causeway) and explain people visit this town to see its old-fashioned style shops, visit the place where Whiskey is made and also to take the train along to the Giants Causeway. Show some images of places of interest in Northern Ireland including Belfast, The Giants Causeway (children will learn more about this place of interest in lesson 5), Londonderry, Bushmills and Mourne Mountains, the ring of Gullion. If possible, give children some time to research Northern Ireland in books, atlases and online.

Talk task: Look at map on page 24 of the Oxford Schools Atlas; *what might attract tourists to Northern Ireland?*

Task: Why is Northern Ireland a popular destination for tourists? Use examples of places you've learned about in your answer.

Step for Depth: *Why are tourists important in Northern Ireland and around the UK?*

Partner teach/Plenary: *What would a geographer say about tourism in Northern Ireland?*

Vocabulary

- Tourism
- Lisburn
- Linen
- Giant's Causeway
- Titanic
- Belfast

Suggested Resources

<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Northern-Ireland/353299>



Teacher Knowledge

People have come from many other places to live in Northern Ireland. Many people in Northern Ireland can trace their families back to Scotland. These people are sometimes known as Ulster-Scots and are mainly Protestant. The people who lived in Ireland before the Scots arrived were the Gaelic Irish community, and they were mainly Catholic. Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom when the rest of Ireland became independent in 1922 within a broader process of decolonisation of the British Empire. (Children will learn more about this in Year 5 History) The separation of Northern Ireland from the Republic of Ireland was called the partition. The partition was deeply divisive and caused much conflict. Today some communities in Northern Ireland still disagree about whether Northern Ireland should be part of the Republic of Ireland or remain in the United Kingdom. Those who wish to remain in union with Britain are called Unionists and those who wish to be part of an Irish nation are called Nationalists.

Knowledge Objective

To understand that Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are two countries.

Knowledge Goals

The Republic of Ireland was partitioned from Northern Ireland in 1922.

Unionists want to remain part of Britain.

Nationalists wish to become part of the independent Irish nation.

Lesson Detail

Prior Learning: *What are the key human features of Northern Ireland? What are the key physical features of Northern Ireland?*

Vocabulary: Introduce the word union. Explain this means joined together. Link to United Kingdom and European Union. Explain the word republic means an independent nation that elects its own government and/or president and doesn't have a king or queen. Explain the word partition means to split something.

Teach: Northern Ireland is part of the United Kingdom. The Republic of Ireland is not part of the United Kingdom. But the island of Ireland is one— the two countries are not cut apart, but there are imaginary lines drawn creating a border between the two countries. The two countries are governed in different ways, they have different people in charge. A long time ago Britain ruled Ireland until 1922 when the island of Ireland was split, or partitioned into two. The Republic of Ireland is not ruled by the United Kingdom, it has an elected president (that people vote for) not a King or Queen. The Republic of Ireland is a member of the EU and people in Ireland use Euros. Some people in Ireland and Northern Ireland disagree about Northern Ireland remaining part of the United Kingdom and there has been conflict over many years about this issue. People who want Northern Ireland to stay part of the United Kingdom are known as unionists. People who want Northern Ireland to be part of the Republic of Ireland are called Nationalists. Both Unionists and Nationalists want the best option for their countries, but they disagree about what this is.

Talk task: *What do Unionists and Nationalists in Ireland want?*

Task: On a map of Northern Ireland, children to draw the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Write a simple explanation of the partition.

Step for Depth: *What is the difference between a Unionist and a Nationalist?*

Partner teach/Plenary: *Why is the island of Ireland split into two countries?*

Vocabulary

- Partition
- Unionists
- Nationalists
- Independence
- Border
- Conflict

Suggested Resources

video: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zt7msrd/video> (Aimed at older children but parts could be used- good visual of NI being 'snipped' from Ireland to help children remember it is separate)

Teacher Knowledge

The Giant's Causeway is a stretch of rock columns that spans 4 miles (6km) along the northern coast of Northern Ireland. There are around 40,000 of these stone pillars that jut out of the cliff faces as if they were steps leading to the sea. Each column or pillar has five to seven irregular sides. The rocks are basalt, a type of metamorphic rock, formed by flows of lava erupting from volcanic activity and splits in the surface of the earth. Scientists think this process happened around 50 to 60 million years ago. Lava that ran across the surface of the land would have cooled on reaching the sea to create their unusual shape. There is an Irish legend that tells of a giant, Finn MacCool, who built the causeway to connect Ireland and Scotland so he could fight a fellow giant, Benadonner, who lived across the sea. The Giant's Causeway is owned by the National Trust who preserve it and it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1986.

Knowledge Objective

To know the Giant's Causeway is made of rock columns.

Knowledge Goals

Giant's Causeway is a landscape of rock columns.

The Giant Causeway was created by an ancient volcanic eruption.

There is an Irish Legend which tells of a Giant creating the causeway so he could cross the sea.

Lesson Detail

Prior Learning: *What do we know about Northern Ireland? Use knowledge organiser to support retrieval of prior learning.*

Vocabulary: Introduce the vocabulary. Explain that basalt is a kind of rock that is formed by lava cooling down quickly. Look at the Knowledge Organiser and share the definitions with partners.

Teach: Teach children that The Giant's Causeway is located on the north coast of Northern Ireland in County Antrim. In 1986, it was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO and most of the Causeway Coast is managed by the National Trust who make sure the area is protected. It is important to protect the area because the Giants Causeway is a very unusual physical geographical feature. Explain that a long time ago, the area was volcanic, with splits in the surface of the earth where molten rock and lava would escape. When lava cools it creates rock. This shows how our landscape is connected to the past. The rocks that make up the Giants Causeway used to be lava but, in this location the lava cooled to create a basalt rock in an unusual shape. Show an image of the rock pillars. Explain that many of the columns or pillars are very tall, some are 12 metres tall, and many are hexagonal shape. People who study rocks are scientists called geologists. Geologists explain the unusual rocks by understanding how lava cools. A long time ago, people didn't know how the rock pillars formed so they told a story about a giant, Finn MacCool, who wanted to cross the sea from Ireland to Scotland to fight another giant, so he built the causeway to give him a route across the sea. Sometimes stories are told to help to explain natural processes or features.

Talk task: Show an image of the Giants Causeway. The author W.M. Thackeray, when speaking about The Giant's Causeway in 1842 said, "It looks like the beginning of the world.". *What do you think Thackeray meant by that?*

Task: Draw the Giants Causeway and label key parts. Explain how geologists think the Giant's Causeway was formed.

Step for Depth: *Why do organisations such as UNESCO and the National Trust protect places around the world?*

Partner teach/Plenary: *What do we know now about the Giants Causeway?*

Vocabulary

- Volcano
- Eruption
- Legend
- Giant
- Basalt
- Column

Suggested Resources

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/giants-causeway>



Teacher Knowledge

The Marble Arch Caves are a natural limestone cave system formed by an underground river and are over seven miles long. The caves are named after the nearby Marble Arch, a natural limestone arch at the upstream end of Cladagh Glen under which the Cladagh River flows. The Marble Arch Caves Geopark is situated in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland. They were formed by water flowing slowly through rocks and gradually dissolving the stone away. Stalactites hang from the roof of a cave and are formed from calcium carbonate in the limestone. Calcium carbonate is a mineral which occurs naturally in chalk, limestone and marble. It is absorbed by the water moving through the limestone rock. When this water meets the air in the cave, the calcium carbonate is deposited as calcite. The calcite slowly builds up to form the rock formations that look like icicles on the roof. Stalagmites form on the ground from the calcite that drips from the stalactites.

Knowledge Objective

To know the Marble Arch Caves are an interesting physical feature located in Northern Ireland.

Knowledge Goals

The Marble Arch Caves were formed by water flowing slowly through rocks and gradually dissolving the stone away.

Stalactites hang from the roof of a cave and reach towards the ground.

Stalagmites form ground and reach up towards the cave roof.

Lesson Detail

Prior Learning: *What is the Giant's Causeway? Reconnect to previous learning.*

Vocabulary: Introduce the word cave. Explain that the word cave comes from Latin cava, from cavus 'hollow'. Caves are formed by water slowly dissolving the rock, often limestone. Geographers call this process is called weathering. Cave systems can have long passageways where the rock has worn away. Inside cave systems sometimes you can find stalagmites and stalactites. The words come from the Greek word 'stalaktos' meaning dripping. Explain that stalactites are formed from rainwater dripping through the rocks in the cave. The water leaves behind minerals which build up creating an ice cream cone shaped mound. Under the stalactite, another cone shape forms, called a stalagmite.

Teach: In Northern Ireland, close to the boarder with Ireland, there is a cave system called the Marble Arch Caves. Many tourists like to visit to look at the caves. The caves were formed by water flowing through the rocks and gradually wearing them away, this is called weathering. Underground rivers also shaped the rocks. This shows how rivers and rocks are connected. The largest passages have formed from active rivers that sink underground on Cuilcagh Mountain. These rivers eventually join together to become the Cladagh River. The caves were first explored in 1985 by an explorer named Edouard Martel and Lyster Jameson, a scientist. Show some images of the Marble Arch Caves. Show and discuss stalagmites and stalactites. Explain the caves are interesting to geographers, geologists (people who study rocks) and scientists because they reveal things about what the earth was like many years ago.

Talk task: *What is the difference between a stalagmite and stalactite?*

Task: Draw a diagram of a cave showing stalagmites and stalactites. Label the features of the cave. Explain how the Marble Arch caves in Northern Ireland were formed.

Step for Depth: *What might Lyster Jameson and Edouard Martel have said to each other on discovering the cave system?*

Partner teach/Plenary: *Why might people visit the Marble Arch Caves?*

Vocabulary

- Cave
- Erode
- Limestone
- Stalagmite
- Stalactite

Suggested Resources

teacher knowledge: <https://www.marblearchcavesgeopark.com> Animation of how stalactites and stalagmites form: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1B2tEqazPI> How caves are formed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puAOYC-hSPM>



Assessment Outcome

To know some geographical features of Northern Ireland

Specific Knowledge Goals:

Northern Ireland is one of the countries in the United Kingdom. It is located on the island of Ireland.

Belfast is the capital city of Northern Ireland.

The Republic of Ireland was partitioned from Northern Ireland in 1922.

Giant's Causeway is a landscape of rock columns made from basalt. It was created by an ancient volcanic eruption.

The Marble Arch Caves were formed by water flowing slowly through rocks and gradually dissolving the stone away.

Suggested Assessment Tasks

Knowledge Organiser: Blank out sections of the knowledge organiser for children to fill in. For example, leave a key word but blank out the definition and vice versa.

Multiple Choice Quiz: Children complete the MCQ and mark their own immediately afterwards to provide instant feedback.

Extended Writing Task:

What would a geographer say about Northern Ireland?

Children must include information about counties, Belfast, Londonderry, the Partition, Lough Neagh, Giant's Causeway, and the formation of Marble Arch Caves.

Suggested Resources

Knowledge organiser, MCQ, structure strips to scaffold writing, example essay.