

3. Northern Ireland



A young boy throwing a ball up against a wall on the day the IRA declared a ceasefire of its military activities in 1994.

Have you ever wondered what the Troubles were about? Why Catholics and Protestants haven't always got along* in Northern Ireland? Or what the Good Friday Agreement has meant for people's lives? This section will shed light on* these questions and more.

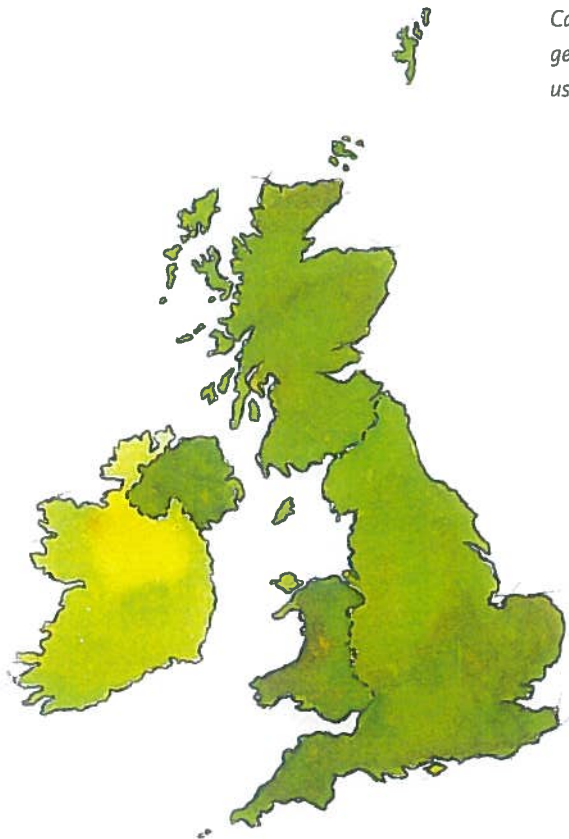
Northern Ireland's sectarian* conflict that lasted for more than 30 years formally ended with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. The material in this section gives an insight into life during the Troubles as well as in contemporary* Northern Ireland. You will learn about the political framework set out in the Agreement meant to resolve* the divided society's differences, find murals in the streets of Belfast, and consider the ways Brexit fuels debates and raises questions of identity and belonging.

get along (vb) komme ud af det med hinanden • **shed light on** (idiom) kaste lys over • **sectarian** (adj) sekterisk (et rigtigt tilhørsforhold til en gruppe, eksempelvis baseret på religion) • **contemporary** (adj) den nyere tids • **resolve** (vb) løse

The Troubles **

The Good Friday* Agreement, officially known as The Belfast Agreement, was signed on 10 April 1998. The Agreement ended the Troubles, Northern Ireland's sectarian conflict that began in the 1960s and claimed the lives of more than 3,500 people who died in bombings, assassinations and clashes. This conflict was between Northern Ireland's two dominant communities, the Catholics and the Protestants. The Good Friday* Agreement was an international agreement between the British and Irish Governments and the majority of Northern Ireland's political parties. It also included loyalist and republican paramilitary* groups. Prior to the Good Friday* Agreement several attempts had been made to create peace and stability in Northern Ireland, but they had all failed.

This chapter gives an overview of the Troubles and outlines the important developments that led to the Good Friday* Agreement.

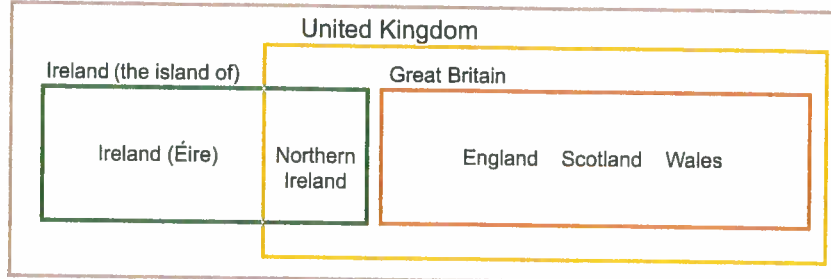


Can you name and describe the different geographical territories of these islands using only this map?

Good Friday (sb) langfredag • **paramilitary** (adj) paramilitær (en væbnet gruppe der står uden for de officielle myndigheder)

TERRITORIES

British Isles



One of the most common mistakes people make when talking about the British Isles is to confuse it with the United Kingdom or Great Britain. This figure illustrates the difference between Ireland, Great Britain, the United Kingdom and the British Isles.

- Great Britain, also known as Britain = England, Scotland and Wales
- United Kingdom = England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; the full name is the "United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland"
- Ireland (Éire in Irish) = the Republic of Ireland
- Ireland (the island of) = Ireland and Northern Ireland
- British Isles = Ireland and the United Kingdom

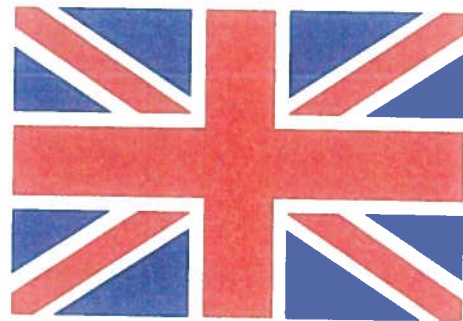
The term British Isles is generally not accepted or used in Ireland as the use of the word "British" implies that Britain has supremacy* over Ireland. Alternative terms include "Britain and Ireland", "the British-Irish Isles" and "the Atlantic Archipelago*". In the Good Friday* Agreement the British Isles are referred to as "these islands".

Contradictory views: Who thinks what?

Catholics and Protestants have different views of Northern Ireland's past and of the political, social and cultural world that make up Northern Ireland. For an agreement to come into place these contradictory* views of Northern Ireland had to be brought together. These information boxes give an introduction to who thought what during the Troubles.



The Irish flag; the tricolour of green, white and orange



The British flag; the Union Jack

Nationalists	Unionists
Nationalists are generally Catholic.	Unionists are generally Protestant.
Nationalists identify with being Irish and feel a union with Ireland.	Unionists identify with being British and feel a union with Great Britain.
Nationalists view the island of Ireland as one place and want it united as one country. Northern Ireland is a part of Ireland that is under British occupation as a result of British colonization.	Unionists view Northern Ireland as being part of the United Kingdom. Northern Ireland is a province of the United Kingdom and has shared a history with England since 1177.
Nationalists want a united Ireland completely independent from the United Kingdom as stated in the Constitution of Ireland in 1937.	Unionists want Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom as amended in the Government of Ireland Act in 1920.

contradictory (adj) modstridende

Nationalists

The main nationalist political parties are the Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) and Sinn Féin. The SDLP, founded in 1970, is committed to democratic and peaceful methods. Sinn Féin, founded in 1905, is a hard-line* political party and is closely associated with the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

The IRA is the main republican paramilitary* group. To republicans, they are freedom fighters. To their opponents, they are terrorists and criminals.

The term nationalist generally applies to the political parties and to those who believe in democratic or peaceful means to achieve their aims. The term republican generally applies to the paramilitary* forces prepared to use force to achieve their aims. Republicanism is an extreme fringe of nationalism.

Nationalist communities call Northern Ireland "the North", "the North of Ireland" and "the Six Counties". The nationalist names linguistically link Northern Ireland with the rest of Ireland.

The official and legal name is Northern Ireland and is used by both the Irish and British Governments today.

Unionists

The main unionist political parties are the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The UUP, founded in 1905, is committed to democratic and peaceful means. The DUP, founded in 1971, is a hard-line* political party suspected of association with loyalist paramilitaries.

The Ulster Defence Association (UDA) and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) are the main loyalist paramilitary* groups. To loyalists, they are protectors. To their opponents, they are terrorists and criminals.

The term unionist generally applies to the political parties and to those who believe in using democratic or peaceful means to achieve their aims. The term loyalist generally applies to the paramilitary* forces prepared to use force to achieve their aims. Loyalism is an extreme fringe of unionism.

Unionist communities call Northern Ireland "Ulster" and "the Province". The unionist names linguistically distinguish Northern Ireland from Ireland.

The main developments during the Troubles

The civil rights movement

The Troubles began in the late 1960s and were initially triggered* by the Catholic community's dissatisfaction with the social and economic inequality they experienced. Catholics felt suppressed and treated as second-class citizens by the Government of Northern Ireland, which was governed under home rule and controlled by the unionist majority.

hard-line (adj) der følger den hårde linje • paramilitary (adj) paramilitær (en væbnet gruppe der står uden for de officielle myndigheder) • trigger (vb) udløse

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The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) was formed in 1967. This movement demanded equal rights for Catholics in Northern Ireland and found Northern Ireland to be a discriminatory state that only served the interests of Protestants. Because the Government of Northern Ireland had not investigated the NICRA's complaints about discrimination against Catholics in Northern Ireland, a series of civil rights marches were organized to draw attention to the Catholic community's discontent and to pressure the Government into meeting their demands for reform.

The campaign for civil rights demanded the following political reforms:

- "One man, one vote", which would allow all people over the age of 18 to vote and remove multiple votes for business owners.
- An end to discrimination in allocation* of council housing.
- An end to discrimination in allocation* of government jobs.
- The repeal* of the Special Powers Act (1921), a legislation Catholics found repressive as it gave authorities special powers to ban organizations, newspapers, seize* property, physically punish anyone in possession of a firearm and arrest anyone designated as* a troublemaker.

Initially, the civil rights marches that began in 1968 passed peacefully even though they were opposed by the Protestant community who perceived the Civil Rights Association's campaign as being a front for nationalist and republican ideology wanting to take over Northern Ireland instead of reforming it. When the civil rights marches were met with counter-demonstrations from Protestant groups who feared their motivations, the civil rights marches often descended into violence. In an attempt to prevent further street violence, the Government of Northern Ireland banned NICRA marches.

Many people view 5 October 1968 as the day the Troubles began. In defiance of the government ban, 400 Catholics proceeded with the civil rights march. The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), the police force that had served Northern Ireland since the partition in 1922, used force and heavy-handed* methods to break up the march. Television cameras recorded the events and the subsequent news coverage outraged the Catholic community to such an extent that it triggered* riots in Derry*/Londonderry*. The next march attracted 10,000 people and the civil rights movement got a lot more support in Northern Ireland.

Sectarian prejudice

The RUC did not have the support of the Catholic community because it was viewed as enforcing unionist rule rather than being a neutral force. As the conflict escalated with frequent rioting and street violence, the RUC could not contain the situation and British

allocation (sb) tildeling • **repeal** (sb) ophævelse • **seize** (vb) beslaglægge • **designate as** (vb) betegne som • **heavy-handed** (adj) hårdhændet • **trigger** (vb) udløse • **Derry/Londonderry** der er en navnestrid om navnet på Nordirlands næststørste by; katolikker bruger navnet Derry, protestanter bruger navnet Londonderry

troops were sent in as security forces on to the streets of Northern Ireland to keep the peace between nationalist and unionist communities. Although initially welcomed by both communities, the Catholic community soon perceived the British troops as enforcing British rule as well. The situation escalated and the conflict took on a sectarian dimension for people from both communities.

The Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP) came into existence in 1970 to remedy* Catholic grievances and the voice of nationalism became louder. The SDLP's aim was to bring about a union with Ireland by general consent.

Paramilitary groups

As Northern Ireland became increasingly violent, riots, arson attacks and physical assaults were common. Both communities developed or saw a revival of paramilitary* organizations that made the violence in Northern Ireland more organized.

Republican paramilitaries

The Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA) formed in 1970 is a faction of the IRA formed in 1919 to fight British rule in Ireland. There are several factions of the IRA and these are often referred to as IRA.

The IRA wants Northern Ireland to be reunited with Ireland and to have a united Ireland where Britain is not involved.

The IRA believe they are the defenders of nationalist communities from loyalist violence, the British Army and the RUC.

The IRA believe they have the right to use armed force against the British forces who occupy their country.

Loyalist paramilitaries

The Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) formed in 1966. The Ulster Defence Association (UDA) formed in 1971.

The UVF and the UDA want Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom and fear becoming a minority Protestant religion in Ireland.

The UVF and the UDA believe they are the defenders of unionist communities from the IRA.

The UVF and the UDA believe they have the right to use armed force against enemies who attack their people and their state.

The paramilitary* groups ruled through fear and controlled residential areas and housing estates. Civilians who did not support the use of violence were either intimidated into silence or coerced* to work for paramilitaries. Several families in Northern Ireland experienced being held hostage while one family member was forced to partake in paramilitary* activities, such as driving a car bomb into position.

remedy (vb) råde bod på • **paramilitary** (adj) paramilitær (en væbnet gruppe der står uden for de officielle myndigheder) • **coerce** (vb) tvinge

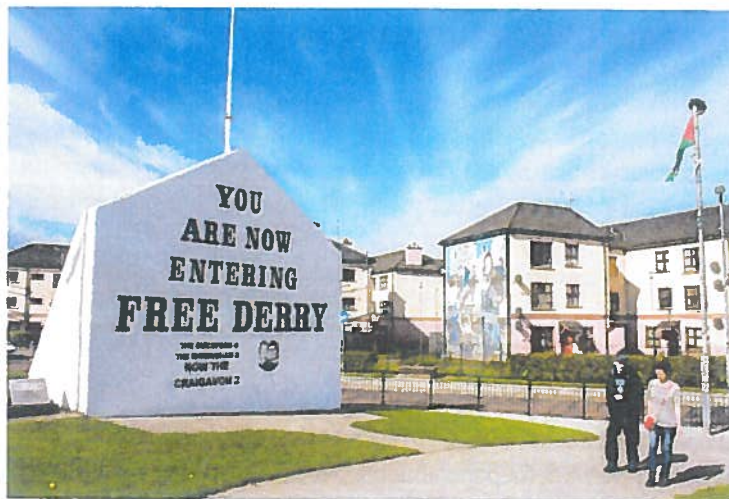
Paramilitaries from both sides had illegal checkpoints and roadblocks guarded by masked men to check vehicles entering the areas. The paramilitaries claimed that checkpoints made the community feel safe. Critics would say the checkpoints were about controlling and intimidating their own community.

Paramilitary* violence in Northern Ireland can be described as a vicious circle characterized by a tit-for-tat* approach to attacks. The actions of the IRA generated support for loyalist paramilitaries and the actions of loyalist paramilitaries generated support for the IRA. This reinforced each side's position as defenders of their communities.

Internment without a trial

Because events spiralled out of control, in part due to the emergence of paramilitary* groups that were in active force, the Government of Northern Ireland introduced internment* in 1971. Internment* was a legislation that empowered security forces to imprison anyone they suspected of terrorism without a trial. It was an attempt to cripple the IRA by taking known troublemakers off the street. Internment* was a failure because the RUC's intelligence* was out of date resulting in the arrest of people no longer active in the IRA, because it was only used against nationalists, which boosted the IRA's support, and finally because it was linked to violence.

Young people from both communities became increasingly willing to join and support paramilitary* organizations, as the Government had no control of the situation.



The Free Derry* Corner in the Bogside area of Derry*. This was the scene of Bloody Sunday in 1972.

paramilitary (adj) paramilitær (en væbnet gruppe der står uden for de officielle myndigheder) • **tit-for-tat** (adj) gengældelses- • **internment** (sb) internering (tilbageholdelse på tvunget opholdssted) • **intelligence** (sb) efterretninger • **Derry/Londonderry** der er en navnestrid om navnet på Nordirlands næststørste by; katolikker bruger navnet Derry, protestanter bruger navnet Londonderry

Bloody Sunday

On 30 January 1972, the civil rights movement marched against internment*. To the Catholic community internment* was viewed as another example of British injustice. The march ended with 13 unarmed protesters shot dead and 14 unarmed protesters injured by the British Army who were present. This event is called Bloody Sunday and was one of the most controversial events in Northern Ireland. The British Army insisted that IRA gunmen had opened fire and that they had only returned fire at people in possession of weapons, while the marchers insisted that the people killed by the British Army were unarmed demonstrators. The first inquiry into the sequence of events on Bloody Sunday called the Widgery Report (1972) accepted the British Army's version of the events that claimed IRA gunmen had fired first. To nationalists this was a cover-up. It was not until the second investigation into the events of Bloody Sunday called the Saville Report (1998-2010) that the British Government acknowledged that the British Army had fired the first shot and had fired on fleeing unarmed civilians. In 1972, the killings on Bloody Sunday played into the hands of* the IRA and brought about a growth in support for the republican movement.

Direct Rule

Because of the total unrest at the time, the British Government suspended the Government in Northern Ireland in March 1972 and from then on Northern Ireland was governed directly from Westminster in London. To the Catholic community this was proof to the world that the unionist Government was incapable of running Northern Ireland and incapable of maintaining law and order.

Growing support for the IRA

Many Catholics felt that the IRA was the only organization that could serve the interests of the Catholic community. The events on Bloody Sunday were viewed as an example of the brutality used against the Catholic community. Although there was sympathy for the NICRA and the political party SDLP, the situation had not improved. The strength of the IRA was that it offered the Catholic community the following:

- Protection from loyalist paramilitary* organizations.
- A way for Catholics to take action against loyalists.
- Political arguments linking current problems with the unfinished business of 1922.
- A belief that peace in Northern Ireland required a united Ireland.

The IRA developed a strategy to undermine British rule in Northern Ireland by bombing economic targets, and targeting British soldiers and officers of the RUC.

internment (sb) internering (tilbageholdelse på tvunget opholdssted) • **play into the hands of** (idiom) gå nogens ærinde • **paramilitary** (adj) paramilitær (en væbnet gruppe der står uden for de officielle myndigheder)

The Prevention of Terrorism Act

In the 1970s and 1980s, killings and bombings were part of life in Northern Ireland. The British Army and the RUC could not prevent the sustained and organized violence from paramilitary* groups on both sides.

The British Government introduced the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1974 to deal with terrorism in the United Kingdom. This legislation gave police authority to detain suspects of terrorism for seven days and seven nights without charge. But this did not make the paramilitaries disappear, and these levels of violence meant that Northern Ireland ceased being a normal democratic society.



Mural dedicated to hunger striker Bobby Sands on Sinn Féin's office in Belfast.

The hunger strikes

In 1976, the British Government removed political prisoner status for paramilitary* prisoners. From then on paramilitary* prisoners were identified as ordinary criminals and not prisoners of war. Many nationalists felt the actions of the British Government were unreasonable and pointed to the inconsistencies in a system, which regarded suspects as criminals, but responded to these criminals with juryless courts and a large military presence.

paramilitary (adj) paramilitær (en væbnet gruppe der står uden for de officielle myndigheder)

To nationalists, British policies seemed to be an attempt to crush nationalists and keep them quiet.

Republican paramilitary* prisoners demanded reestablishment of their political status and the hunger strikes were a way of obtaining this. On 5 May 1981, the first hunger striker Bobby Sands, a 27-year-old senior IRA commander, died in the Maze Prison. Around 100,000 people attended his funeral and the British Government's lack of intervention was widely criticized. By October 1981, ten republican hunger strikers had starved themselves to death. Each prisoner's fast had begun one-two weeks apart, which was a strategic move designed to prolong the hunger strike and get media attention. Their funerals were equally large events.

The hunger strikes played a key role in obtaining sympathy for the republican movement and for Sinn Féin becoming a significant political force. Bobby Sands had run for member of the British Parliament from prison and had won the seat shortly before his death. Sands' victory made Sinn Féin realize it would be able to gain a popular mandate for its policies. Sinn Féin campaigned and was successful in national and local elections.

IRA bombs Britain

The IRA felt that its use of violence as a means to get British forces out of Northern Ireland and its targeting of economic infrastructure in Northern Ireland did not get sufficient attention in Britain. Therefore the IRA began attacking the economic infrastructure in Britain as well. Although this policy didn't get the British to leave Northern Ireland, the attacks kept the situation in the public eye and brought about political talks about obtaining peace.

Political talks

The Troubles in Northern Ireland had the attention of the many Americans with Irish roots who felt the IRA was engaged in a legitimate battle. Under the Presidency of Bill Clinton (1993-2001), the Troubles in Northern Ireland were on the political agenda and the USA played a role in bringing about the peace process in Northern Ireland.

It helped that people on both sides of the conflict in Northern Ireland wanted peace and wanted the violence to cease. In the early 1990s, Northern Ireland's political parties tried to find a resolution* that would end the Troubles. The key question for each political party was how to restore peace in Northern Ireland. The difficult task was to reconcile the different groups with contradicting views and aims. The main political parties involved in this process were:

paramilitary (adj) paramilitær (en væbnet gruppe der står uden for de officielle myndigheder) • **resolution** (sb) løsning

- Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP)
 - Led by John Hume.
 - The SDLP's aim was to reform Northern Ireland through a constitutional resolution*. The SDLP believed that Ireland should be included in how Northern Ireland would be run because Catholics, as a minority community, needed Ireland's protection.
- Sinn Féin
 - Led by Gerry Adams.
 - Sinn Féin's aim was to get the British to leave Northern Ireland. Sinn Féin had close ties with the IRA and believed that cutting all connections with Britain would solve the situation.
- Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)
 - Led by David Trimble.
 - The UUP's aim was to have Northern Ireland remain part of the United Kingdom and have tough security measures to solve the situation. The UUP felt that some political reform would be needed, but Ireland should not be involved in the process.
- Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)
 - Led by Ian Paisley.
 - The DUP's aim was to have Northern Ireland remain part of the United Kingdom and this was non-negotiable. To solve the situation they would have to defeat the IRA and they would need a huge security effort to do this.

Steps towards the Good Friday Agreement

The 1990s was a time characterized by change and agreement. The British and Irish Governments attempted to assist in establishing a peace process with a number of joint agreements, which were turning points in the peace negotiations.

The Downing Street Declaration (1993) stated that the British Government did not have any selfish, political or economic interest in Northern Ireland and that it would respect the will of the majority. Northern Ireland could become part of Ireland only with the consent of the majority of the population in Northern Ireland, and the Irish Government accepted the principle of consent for Irish unity. Both countries agreed to use peaceful means and to end paramilitary* violence. The Downing Street Declaration did not bring peace, but it showed that the British and Irish Governments were prepared to work towards a new political framework for Northern Ireland.

resolution (sb) løsning • **paramilitary** (adj) paramilitær (en væbnet gruppe der står uden for de officielle myndigheder)

IRA ceasefire* was called in August 1994. Loyalist ceasefire* was called in October 1994. There were no wild celebrations as people had seen many ceasefires come and go, but it was a welcome change and good news for the peace process.

The Joint Framework Document (1995) set up a plan for a new government in Northern Ireland signed by both Great Britain and Ireland. The new Government of Northern Ireland included a new Assembly* for Northern Ireland and a North-South Council of Ministers and it would respect the identity and sense of allegiance* of both the unionist and nationalist communities. It set the agenda for the talks that resulted in the Good Friday* Agreement.

The European Union (EU) also contributed to the peace process by funding various projects aimed at improving community relations and by shaping attitudes towards borders within the EU. Borders were becoming irrelevant for countries in the European Union, which included Britain and Ireland.



Stormont, the Parliament buildings in Belfast Northern Ireland.

In 1997, formal peace negotiations began at Stormont involving all political parties and the British and Irish Governments. It was challenging to get all the political parties

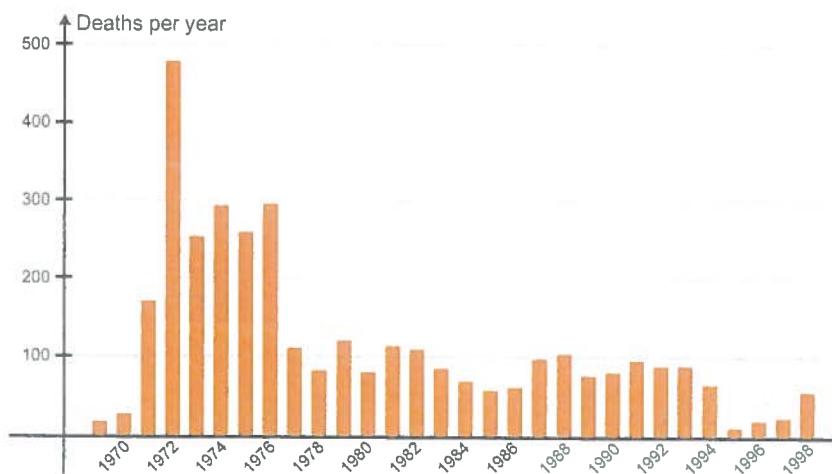
ceasefire (sb) våbenhvile • **Assembly** (sb) lovgivende forsamling • **allegiance** (sb) troskab • **Good Friday** (sb) langfredag

involved. The DUP refused to participate in negotiations because the IRA had not yet agreed to decommission* its weapons, and Sinn Féin was at times excluded from the talks because the IRA renewed violence. A small group of IRA members did not support Sinn Féin's participation in the peace process because it was seen as a betrayal of the republican cause. This resulted in republican splinter groups*, such as the Continuity IRA and the Real IRA. Loyalist splinter groups*, such as the Orange Volunteers and the Red Hand Defenders, also rejected the peace process.

The Good Friday Agreement

The Good Friday* Agreement was signed on 10 April 1998, and it promised new beginnings and a bright future. The Troubles lasted 30 years during which more than 3,500 people were killed and more than 40,000 people were injured. The population of Northern Ireland was about 1,500,000 people and it has been estimated that about half of the population have been closely associated to someone who was killed or injured during the Troubles.

DEATHS RELATED TO THE CONFLICT YEAR BY YEAR



Republican paramilitaries were responsible for approximately two thirds of the deaths during the Troubles, while loyalist paramilitaries were responsible for approximately one third of the deaths. In the 1990s, loyalist attacks superseded republican attacks for the first time.

decommission (vb) aflevere (våben) • splinter group (sb) udbrydergruppe • Good Friday (sb) langfredag

It is important to remember that most families in Northern Ireland mostly lived normal lives during the Troubles. Even when affected by the Troubles, most people did not nurse a grievance* or become extremists. In Northern Irish politics, there was also a focus on the everyday issues of normal life.

QUESTIONS FOR THE TROUBLES

1. Why did the Troubles begin in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s?
2. What was the effect of internment*?
3. How did Bloody Sunday impact the IRA?
4. What made the paramilitaries so powerful?
5. What was the effect of the hunger strikes?
6. What made the Good Friday* Agreement possible?

TIMELINE OF THE TROUBLES

1. Place the events in chronological order. If an event ran over a longer period of time, the event should be placed the year it began.
 - Bloody Sunday
 - Internment*
 - Civil rights movement
 - Political peace negotiations
 - Direct rule
 - Revival of paramilitary* organizations
 - Hunger strikes
 - The Good Friday* Agreement
 - IRA bombs Britain
2. Once you have placed the events in chronological order, you can fill in the blanks:

Year	Event	Definition	Consequences

nurse a grievance (idiom) føle sig fortabt • **internment** (sb) internering (tilbageholdelse på tvunget opholdssted) • **Good Friday** (sb) langfredag • **paramilitary** (adj) paramilitær (en væbnet gruppe der står uden for de officielle myndigheder)



DISCUSSION: PEACE WALLS IN NORTHERN IRELAND



A peace wall in Belfast.

Belfast, Derry*/Londonderry*, Portadown and Lurgan have peace walls, which are a series of barriers that separate Catholic neighbourhoods from Protestant neighbourhoods to minimise violence between the two communities.

Discuss whether a peace wall is a paradox.

Derry/Londonderry der er en navnestrid om navnet på Nordirlands næststørste by; katolikker bruger navnet Derry, protestanter bruger navnet Londonderry