



# Life in 1960s: Ireland

Term	Definition
Ecumenism	The attempt to promote understanding and cooperation between various different Christian Churches around the world.
Free Trade	Allowing goods to move between countries without any trade barriers such as tariffs or quotas.
Protectionism	Using high tariffs on goods coming into a country to protect native businesses from foreign competition.
Rural depopulation	Young people left rural areas to find work and increasingly only older people remained.
Vatican II	A council of the Catholic Church that met from 1962 to 1965 to reform the Church for the modern world.

## 2.12 DEBATE the idea that the 1960s was an important decade on the island of Ireland, referring to relevant personalities, issues and events

### The Stone Age

The 1960s was a decade of significant change and development in Ireland. After decades of economic stagnation and cultural conservatism, the country began to experience unprecedented growth and modernisation. This period saw the emergence of a new middle class, the expansion of industry, and increased participation in the global economy. At the same time, the traditional social structures and religious institutions that had dominated Irish life for centuries began to weaken, as young people challenged traditional attitudes towards gender, sexuality, and authority.

Politically, the 1960s were marked by a series of important events, including the election of Sean Lemass as Taoiseach in 1959, the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1961, and the implementation of a range of economic and social reforms. The government also took steps to improve relations with the United Kingdom and the wider international community, culminating in Ireland's accession to the European Economic Community in 1973.

Despite these changes, however, the 1960s was also a period of continuing social and political unrest, as tensions between the Irish government and Northern Ireland escalated into violence and conflict. This period saw the emergence of the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland, as well as the growth of Irish nationalism and republicanism, which would shape the country's political landscape for decades to come.

### Decade of Change

The 1960s saw a rapid modernization of Irish society, with increased urbanization, industrialization, and globalization. The country's economy experienced unprecedented growth, with the emergence of new industries such as pharmaceuticals and electronics. Social attitudes began to shift, as younger generations challenged the traditional conservative values of their parents and grandparents. Women's rights and the rights of the LGBTQ+ community became major issues, while the role of the Catholic Church in Irish society began to come under scrutiny.

### Irish UN Peacekeeping Forces arrive in the Congo

The deployment of Irish troops to the Congo was a significant moment in Ireland's history, demonstrating the country's commitment to international peacekeeping and establishing its reputation as a reliable partner in the international community. The Irish soldiers who served in the Congo faced many challenges, including dangerous conditions, inadequate equipment, and cultural differences, but they gained a reputation for their professionalism and impartiality.

### The Launch of Telefís Éireann

The launch of **Telefís Éireann**, now RTÉ, on the 31st December 1961 was a major milestone in the development of Irish media, providing the public with access to a wider range of news, entertainment, and cultural programming. The launch of RTE helped to break the stranglehold of the Church and traditional institutions over Irish public discourse, giving a voice to a wider range of perspectives and ideas.

### Free Education

The introduction of free education in 1966 by Donogh O'Malley was a significant step towards a more equal and just society in Ireland, breaking down the barriers to education that had long disadvantaged working-class and rural children. The policy helped to create a more skilled and educated workforce, which in turn helped to drive economic growth and development.

### JFK Visits Ireland

**John F Kennedy visiting Ireland** was a highly symbolic moment, showcasing the strong cultural and historical ties between Ireland and the United States. The visit was a source of great pride for many Irish people, and helped to bolster the country's international reputation at a time when it was still a relatively small and peripheral nation.

### Vatican II

The **Second Vatican Council (Vatican II)**, which took place from 1962 to 1965, was a pivotal moment in the history of the Catholic Church, bringing about significant changes in the Church's doctrine and practices. The Council emphasized the importance of the laity and the need for greater dialogue with other religions and with the modern world. The changes brought about by Vatican II had a profound impact on Irish society, challenging the dominant role of the Church in public life and paving the way for a more secular and diverse society.

### The Troubles

The Troubles was a period of a complex and multifaceted conflict, rooted in centuries of political, social, and economic tensions between Northern Ireland's Catholic and Protestant communities. The conflict was characterized by sectarian violence, terrorism, and repression, and had a profound impact on Irish society as a whole. The Troubles ultimately ended with the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, which established a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland and paved the way for a more peaceful and prosperous future.

