

OPW resources for Home Schooling

Visit an OPW Heritage site

1. Group Guided Tours of OPW Sites

Free guided tours of OPW sites are available to groups of school children as part of the OPW Free School Visit scheme. A number of home school families can group together to benefit from this scheme. You will need to contact the site directly to make the arrangements.

See <https://heritageireland.ie/learn/educational-school-visits/> for the details.

2. Book an individual visit

Many of the OPW sites are free of charge. Those that have entry fees can be booked directly with the site. Families can choose to self-guide or join a guided tour. Some sites may have special family tours at specific times. The site itself will have details of tours and events.

See www.heritageireland.ie



Check out the full list of sites to visit:

<https://heritageireland.ie/visit/places-to-visit/>



The Entrance Stone at Newgrange Neolithic Site



Kilkenny Castle



Castletown House and Parklands



Glendalough Monastic Village

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Online Educational resources available for download on www.heritageireland.ie:

Heritage Ireland website is home to a growing collection of online resources ideal for school children. See:

<https://heritageireland.ie/learn/educational-resources/downloads/>

Battle of the Boyne: <https://heritageireland.ie/educational-downloads/battle-of-the-boyne/>

Bru na Boyne: <https://heritageireland.ie/educational-downloads/bru-na-boinne-visitor-centre-newgrange-and-knowth/>

Dublin Castle: <https://heritageireland.ie/educational-downloads/dublin-castle/>

Jerpoint Abbey: <https://heritageireland.ie/educational-downloads/jerpoint-abbey/>

St Audoen's Church : <https://heritageireland.ie/educational-downloads/audoens-monument-dublin/>

Ennis Friary: <https://heritageireland.ie/educational-downloads/ennis-friary-graves-transcriptions/>

Medieval Dublin: <https://heritageireland.ie/educational-downloads/medieval-dublin/>

The Political side: <https://heritageireland.ie/educational-downloads/the-political-side/>

Heritage Ireland is home to a growing collection of learning resources, exhibitions and collections for all ages:

You will find stories from our gardens and building here:

<https://heritageireland.ie/learn/conservation-research/>

Fascinating stories from the OPW collections, including the Kilmainham Gaol Autograph collection are available here:

<https://heritageireland.ie/learn/conservation-research/collections/>

Online exhibitions can be found here: <https://heritageireland.ie/learn/exhibitions/>

Fantastic article on 'Six Thousand Years of Learning':

<https://heritageireland.ie/learn/exhibitions/six-thousand-years-of-learning/>

Online Educational resources on www.archaeology.ie:

It's About Time is a collaboration between the Limerick Education Centre and the National Monuments Service. This programme is designed to help primary school children to understand about the lives of people in the past. *Time in Transition* is a resource pack mainly for Transition Year students.

<https://www.archaeology.ie/education>

Online Resources from around the country

Aughnanure Castle in Oughterard, Co Galway was home to the fearsome O'Flaherty family, whose motto was 'Fortune favours the strong'. They ruled west Connacht for 300 years from this fine six-storey tower on the shores of Lough Corrib. Grace O'Malley, later known as Granuaile, the formidable pirate queen ruled Connacht from this castle when she married into the O'Flaherty family. Check out their family Quest:

<https://www.heritageireland.ie/assets/uploads/2021/04/family-quest-activity.pdf>

Battle of the Boyne is the site of the famous battle for the English Crown between King James II and his son-in-law King William III in 1690.

Primary and Secondary educational resources plus a tree trail are available here:

<https://battleoftheboyne.ie/education/>

Bru na Boyne is a UNESCO World Heritage site famous for the spectacular prehistoric passage tombs at Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth which were built about 3200BC. There are a wide range of educational resources for Primary and Secondary schools as well as adult learners:

<https://www.worldheritageireland.ie/bru-na-boinne/educational-resources/>

Casino Marino is an 18th century pleasure house designed by Sir William Chambers for James Caulfeild, 1st Earl Charlemont. It is one of the most important examples of neoclassical architecture in Ireland.

Educational Resources for all ages can be found here:

<https://casinomarino.ie/education/>

Castletown house is a Palladian style house built in the 1720s for William Conolly, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons.

There are primary and secondary school educational resources, including Maths Trails, Living History and a Tree Trail: <https://castletown.ie/schools/>

Derrynane House was home to Daniel O'Connell. O'Connell, known as the liberator, fought for Catholic Emancipation and the abolition of slavery.

Their educational materials and details of their Summer School can be found here:

<https://derrynanehouse.ie/education/>

Doneraile Court dates to the 1720's and is set in magnificent grounds.

Details of their children's tree trail can be found here: <https://doneraileestate.ie/>

Dublin Castle was built by the Normans by 1229 and remained as the centre of English/ British rule until 1922. They have extensive educational resources for Primary and secondary school students: <https://www.dublincastle.ie/activity-sheets-2/>

Emo Court was designed by the eminent architect James Gandon and was once one of the largest estates in Ireland. Gandon also designed the Custom House, the Four Courts and Kings Inns. Details of the history of the house can be found here:

<https://emocourt.ie/history/>

Farmleigh House and Estate dates to the 18th century. It is now most well known as the home of the Guinness family in Phoenix Park. The estate has its own farm, art gallery and outdoor sculpture exhibition. Details of the history and art collection can be found here: <https://farmleigh.ie/blog/>

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Glebe House and Gallery was the home of artist Derek Hill. The Regency-style house is decorated with William Morris textiles, and collections of Islamic and Japanese art, as well as 300 works by leading twentieth-century artists such as Picasso and Kokoshka. Online educational materials and Leaving Certificate art videos can be here: <https://glebegallery.ie/education/>

Ilnacullin Garnish Island is a world renowned island garden of rare beauty. Check out their art, sculpture and live webcam of sea Eagles nesting on the island: <https://garinishisland.ie/>

Ionad Cultúrtha an Phiarsaigh, Connemara – Pearse’s Cottage tells the story of Patrick Pearse writer, educator and leader of the 1916 Rising. <https://www.icpconamara.ie/#english>

Irish National War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge, Dublin were designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens to commemorate the 49,400 Irish soldiers who died in the First World War. The Commemorative site has information and resources on the war dead: <https://opwdublincommemorative.ie/war-memorial/history/>

Iveagh Garden in Dublin was designed by Ninian Niven in 1865 as the grounds for the Dublin Exhibition Palace. Today they are Dublin’s secret garden. <https://iveaghgardens.ie/education/>

Kilkenny Castle and parklands were constructed in the 12th century and were the seat of the Butlers for over 600 years. They have a wide range of educational materials for schools, families and the wider community: <https://kilkennycastle.ie/education/>

Kilmainham Gaol operated between 1796 and 1922 as the Dublin County Gaol. Rebels from 1798, 1803, 1848, 1867 and 1916, were imprisoned here as well as republicans during the War of Independence and the Civil War. Educational materials for Primary and secondary school can be found here: <https://kilmainhamgaolmuseum.ie/education/>

National Botanic Gardens in Dublin and Kilmacurragh, Co. Wicklow are known for their exquisite plants, historic glasshouses and plant conservation. Their education resources are a treasure trove of botanically learning, online exhibitions and events: <https://botanicgardens.ie/glasnevin/schools/resources-for-schools-tree-journal-activity-pack/>

The Pearse Museum was home to Patrick Pearse’s pioneering Irish-speaking school from 1910 to 1916, when Pearse was executed following the 1916 rising. Educational materials available include an online tour and original documents relating to Patrick Pearse’s time as headmaster. <https://pearsemuseum.ie/education/>

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Phoenix Park Visitor centre is home to an entertaining exhibition of the park's history from 3500 BC to the present day. **Ashtown Castle** is a tower house that probably dates to the 17th century, but may be as old as the 15th century. The schools page has a handy link to great resources for learning about trees. <https://phoenixpark.ie/schools/> and <https://phoenixpark.ie/research/>

The landscape around **Rathcroghan** is home to over 240 archaeological sites, including stone age tombs, royal burial mounds, great ringforts and places of ceremonial inauguration. Educational materials include a virtual tour and interpretation of this fascinating site: <https://www.rathcroghan.ie/discover/>

Rathfarnham Castle dates to Elizabethian period. It was build for Adam Loftus, who later became Archbishop of Dublin and Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Their education materials include worksheets for both the building and the parklands: <https://rathfarnhamcastle.ie/education/>

St Fionan's Monastery stands at the summit of **Skellig Michael**, one of Irelands two UNESCO World Heritage sites. It is famous for it's stone beehive huts. <https://www.worldheritageireland.ie/sceilg-mhichil/>

St Audoen's Church was built around 1190 and is the oldest parish church in Dublin. Educational materials including games and worksheets can be found here: <https://heritageireland.ie/educational-downloads/audoens-monument-dublin/>

The Blasket Visitor Centre stands at the very tip of the Dingle Peninsula. The centre tells the story of the Blasket Islands and the tiny but tenacious Irish speaking community who lived there until the mid-20th century. The Learn tab in the website has an interesting range of resources about the island: <https://blasket.ie/amline-agus-leabharliosta/>

The John F Kennedy Arboretum, Wexford covers a massive 252 hectares on the summit and southern slopes of Slieve Coillte. There are 200 forest plots grouped by continent containing 4,500 trees and shrubs. The lake is a haven for waterfowl. A visitor centre houses engaging exhibitions on JFK and on the Arboretum itself. Check out their four permanent Orienteering courses, including one that is buggy friendly. <https://heritageireland.ie/visit/places-to-visit/the-john-f-kennedy-arboretum/> and scroll to the end of the page.

Áras an Uachtaráin is home to the President of Ireland. The house was build in 1751 and was later extended as the home of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Children can learn about the role and powers of the President in this well designed and very informative website: <https://president.ie/en/childrens-section>