Dictionaries


This up-to-date dictionary is especially strong in its coverage of Irish and English idioms. It includes irregular verb charts and conjugation aids.

**Focloir Bearla-Gaedilge.** By T. O’Neill Lane, Dublin: Phoenix, 1915. [St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – PB1291 .L3 1915]

At 1,750 pages, this title is possibly the most comprehensive dictionary of its kind. Tabbed sections make it easy to navigate, and marginalia supplement many entries.

**Focloir Gaedhilge Agus Bearla.** By The Irish Texts Society [Rev. Patrick S. Dineen, ed.]. Dublin: For the Irish Texts Society by the Educational Company of Ireland, 1927. [St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – PB1291 .D5 1934]

This dictionary was compiled using references from both Irish literature and common speech, as documented by linguists interviewing Irish speakers. It has a strong pronunciation guide.

**Irish Dictionary Online.**

[Available online: http://irishdictionary.ie]

This frequently-updated online dictionary is the perfect resource for quick consultation online. It has a separate search field for verbs, which provides complete conjugations.

**Focal.ie**

[Available online: http://www.focal.ie]

Maintained by students at University College, Dublin, this online dictionary allows users to translate Irish words or phrases into many different languages, and vice versa. The advanced features allow searching by noun, verb, adjective, etc., as well as phrase and publication-searching.
**SELF-STUDY COURSES & GUIDES**

[St. Michael’s 2nd Floor – PB1227.5 .E5 B97 2002
[S. Michael’s 1st Floor Audio Visual Section – PB1227.5 .E5 B972 2005 CD pt.1 and 2]*

This illustrated, beginner-level course-pack contains several interactive exercises as well as companion audio CDs. Exercises can be completed individually or in groups.

[St. Michael’s 2nd Floor – PB1227.5 .E5 O36 1998]  
St. Michael’s 1st Floor Audio Visual Section – PB1227.5 .E5 O36 1998 cassette 1-5]

Pick up this interactive learner’s guide for an introduction to the basics of the language (sound, grammar, common phrases, etc.), along with chapters organized by situation (Arranging a time to meet, Asking someone where they’re going, what their interests are, etc.) to teach basics of conversational Irish.

[St. Michael’s 2nd Floor – PB1227.5 .E5 O85 1988]  
[St. Michael’s 1st Floor Audio Visual Section – PB1227.5 .E5 O853 1988 ac.1-3]

Written by an experienced teacher and speaker of Irish, this course contains detailed explanations of how the language operates, along with a rich vocabulary section in every chapter. Using this resource, it is easy to build up a sizeable repertoire of Irish words quickly.

*Teastaseorpach na Gaeilge.*  
[Available online at: http://www.teg.ie]

Learners at all levels can find written and oral exams through this resource. Teachers can even download a complete Irish language curriculum in both Irish and English (roughly 50 pages per course).

[Coming soon to the St. Michael’s College Library]  
[Sample chapter available online: http://www.siopa.ie]

This course is ideal for those who have taken a year or two of Irish at the university level or have gone through the public school system studying the language in Ireland. With two CDs and sample conversations, this book aims to familiarize learners with the sound of the language.
Since the language has three distinct dialects and many regional variations of words and sayings, this is an essential resource for Irish speakers. Every page of the atlas contains a map of Ireland, along with a phonetic spelling of words which have dialectic differences.

Part of the *Cambridge Studies In Linguistics* series, O Siadhail’s books investigates the grammar of Modern Irish. Comparison of dialects is offered where grammatical conventions are applied differently.

This is one the most easy-to-follow works on Irish grammar due to its organization and focus (the conjugation of verbs). Each verb chart clearly indicates how to conjugate the verb in every tense, and even provides similar verbs. The index allows readers to quickly locate the verb they would like to conjugate.

This book strives to cover only the essential points of Irish grammar, while avoiding academic jargon. The 2 audio CDs allow learners to hear grammatical rules demonstrated aloud.

The National University of Ireland’s open access research repository is a good source for free, current research on the Irish language.

TG4 is Ireland’s Official television station. *TG4 Beo* is a great way to hear the sound of the language and to associate the sounds of words with their spellings, thanks to the closed-captioning added to many of the programs.
This online news source for the arts and entertainment contains brief articles written in accessible language. Many of the contributors are students of Irish themselves.

**LITERATURE**

[St. Michael’s 2nd Floor – PB1397 .T3 1984]

Regarded as Ireland’s defining epic narrative, the *Tain bo Cuailgne*, or “The Cattle Raid of Cooley”, was transcribed in the 7th Century, although scholars believe it was transmitted orally much earlier than this.

[St. Michael’s 2nd Floor – PB1347 .I7 v.3]

O’Rahilly, who wrote scathing political satires following the Restoration, is one of Ireland’s most influential poets. O’Rahilly is believed to have started the ‘Aisling’ (Irish word for ‘dream’) poetic tradition, wherein Ireland as a nation is personified as a woman in distress.

[St. Michael’s 2nd Floor – PB1424 .D8 1981]

Since the use of the Irish language has declined significantly since the Famine, this book showcases some of Ireland’s greatest poets and poems from 1600-1900 to generate enthusiasm for the language.

[St. Michael’s 2nd Floor – PB1399 .N473 A24 1993]

Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill is among the most widely-read and criticized Irish language poets of this generation. Because the poems are presented in both languages, Irish learners can take note of the translations and build up their vocabulary.

[St. Michael’s 2nd Floor – PB1399 .O775 A6 1993]

O’Searcaigh is one of the most celebrated, and controversial, contemporary Irish language poets. Irish and English translations are included to allow the experienced Irish speaker and the learner to access the text.

[St. Michael’s 2nd Floor – PB1399 .O28 C74 2009]

The best-known full-length novel in the Irish language (and one of the only ones), this comic work consists of the dialogue between sisters who are buried and begin feuding over why one of them received the better burial plot.


This is one of the earliest plays in the Irish language. Known for his IRA involvement, his love of the drink, and his embodiment of Irish culture in almost every way, Behan learned Irish from O Cadhain, and wrote many of his plays while in jail. Although this text contains only the Irish text, English translations are available in the Kelly Library, and the fact it was written in English first and that Behan’s knowledge of Irish is not as advanced as some other authors make it a viable read for Intermediate-level Irish speakers.

**HISTORY OF THE LANGUAGE**

**Sloinne Gaeilge is Gall = Irish Names and Surnames.** By Patrick Woulfe. Dublin: M.H. Gill, 1923.

[St. Michael’s 1st Floor Reference Area – CS2411 .W6]
[St. Michael’s 2nd Floor – CS2411 .W6]

Beyond providing the meaning and origin of Irish names and their Anglocized forms, this study also describes socio-historic factors which influenced the naming system, and examines the geographic dispersal of many lineages.


[St. Michael’s 2nd Floor – PB1217 .B7 1879]

Ogam was the first alphabet used by Irish speakers, and it can be found carved into many monuments currently surviving in Ireland. This is an extensive study of this earlier alphabet, with the Irish and English words provided for Ogam inscriptions documented throughout Ireland. This provides insight into early usages of the language, as well as the historic context which can be inferred from the meaning of the inscriptions.

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