

That's Interesting!



A worksheet for adults to practise reading, writing, spelling and numbers.

2024 – A look back



Key words you will see in this story

Taoiseach

referendum (re fer end um)

government (gov ern ment)

constituency (con stit u ency)

president (pres id ent)

organisation (or gan is a tion)

emigrated (em ig rat ed)

election (el ec tion)

constitution (con stit u tion)

European (Eur o pe an)

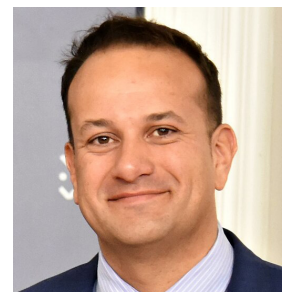
majority (ma jor it y)

anniversary (ann iv ers ar y)

volunteers (vol un teers)

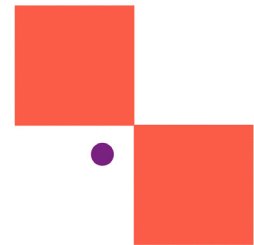
In March, Leo Varadkar informed the country that he would be stepping down as Taoiseach and leader of the Fine Gael party. Simon Harris took over both roles and at 37 years of age, he became the youngest ever Taoiseach of Ireland.

2024 was a year of elections. In March, the people were asked to vote in two referendums to change and expand the meaning of the words family and home carer in the Irish constitution. Both referendums were not passed as the majority voted not to change the wording.



**Former Taoiseach
Leo Varadkar**

Image source:
EU2016 SK, CC0, via
Wikimedia Commons



In May, we had two more elections, the local government elections to elect local county councillors and the European election to elect Irish members to the European Parliament.

Finally in November the people were asked to vote once again in the general election, to elect local TDs (Teachta Dála – a member of Dáil Éireann) to represent them at national level. In a general election the country is divided into 43 areas. Each area is called a constituency and, depending on the population in each, between three and five TDs are elected to represent each constituency.

A total of 174 TDs were elected in the 2024 general election. However, the lowest number of people turned out to vote in more than 100 years.

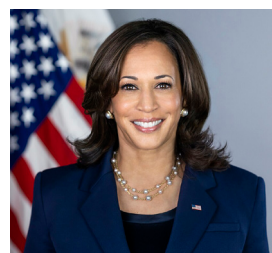
In America, we watched closely as the build-up began for the election of the 47th president of the United States. Former president Donald Trump was chosen to run again, taking on the current president Joe Biden. During the year, however, Mr. Biden, decided not to run and vice president Kamala Harris was chosen instead.

Both candidates travelled across America, holding large rallies and giving rousing speeches. Donald Trump won the election by a considerable majority. He will be sworn in as president for the second time in February 2025. Mr. Trump has visited Ireland several times as he owns a luxury hotel and golf course in County Clare.



Donald Trump

Image source:
Shaleah Craighead, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons



Kamala Harris

Image source:
Lawrence Jackson, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

In sport, the Olympic and Paralympic Games were held in Paris in July and September. Ireland sent teams to each and had their most successful results ever.

The GAA (Gaelic Athletics Association) celebrated its 140th anniversary this year. The organisation was set up by Clare man Michael Cusack on 1 November 1884, in Hayes' Hotel in Thurles. It is now one of the largest sporting organisations in the world.

Every parish in Ireland, big or small, has its own GAA club where football and hurling teams proudly represent their club in matches, while wearing their club colours and crest on their jerseys.



There are over 2,200 GAA clubs all over Ireland and 400 GAA clubs in different parts of the world. Clubs in faraway countries such as Australia and USA (United States of America) allow Irish people who have emigrated, and their families, to stay connected with home and play the Irish sports that they love.

GAA players and club members are all volunteers and give their time freely for the good of their club, parish and county. In many places the GAA club is the life and soul of the community where friends are made, and social events are held. During the Covid lockdowns in 2020 and 2021, members of the local GAA clubs played a big part in looking out for older neighbours and anyone needing support.

The two biggest days of the year in GAA sport are the All-Ireland Hurling and Football Finals, which are held in Croke Park. The finals this year provided much excitement. Clare won the hurling title, their first All-Ireland since 2013, beating Cork in a game that was said to have been one of the best finals ever played.



Armagh won the football when they beat Galway. It was their first title since 2002. This was the first time since 2010 that neither of the top football counties of Kerry, Dublin or Mayo were playing in the All-Ireland final.

In the ladies' football final Kerry beat Galway to win their first senior All-Ireland in 30 years. Cork defeated Galway by a goal to win a 30th All-Ireland senior camogie title.

The sporting year ended with the much talked about women's boxing clash between Ireland's Katie Taylor and Amanda Serrano from Puerto Rico. This was their second time meeting.

The event, which was held in Texas in the USA, was broadcast live on Netflix. It is thought the fight was watched by two hundred million people world-wide. It was a tough fight with both boxers taking hard blows. However, Katie was declared the winner by a very tight margin. Both women are already talking about having a third fight next year, possibly to be held in Ireland.



Katie Taylor

Image source:
cormac70 from London, via
Wikimedia Commons

In February, the Government brought in the Deposit Refund Scheme. We are now charged an extra 15 cents on the price of a plastic or aluminium drink container, (or 25 cents on larger items), that have this **Re-turn** logo on them. To claim back your deposit, you must then return your clean, undamaged drink containers to special vending machines that are found at all the main supermarkets across the country. It is hoped that this will encourage more people to recycle and cut down on waste.



Finally, weather experts declared that 2024 was the hottest year on record. The ice regions of the Antarctic are melting. This year many countries had scorching heat, drought and raging wildfires. These were followed in the autumn by record amounts of rainfall, storms, hurricanes and severe flooding, with lives lost in some cases.

Quiz



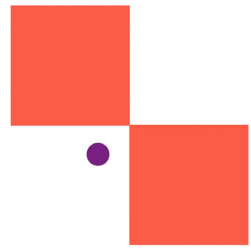
Read over the story again and then answer the questions in this quiz.

(The answers can all be found in the story.)

1. Who became the youngest Taoiseach of Ireland in April 2024? _____
2. How many TDs were elected in the general election? _____
3. Name the two candidates who ran in the American Presidential Election?

4. Who is the current president of America? _____
5. In what year was the GAA founded? _____
6. Who set up the organisation? _____
7. How many GAA clubs are in Ireland? _____
8. What county won the All-Ireland Hurling Final in 2024? _____
9. Where did Katie Taylor's fight take place? _____
10. Where did the Olympic Games take place in 2024? _____
11. On what kind of containers do we now pay a deposit on? _____
12. What county won the ladies football All Ireland Final? _____
13. What county won the All-Ireland camogie Final? _____
14. Write down 3 effects that are due to high temperatures in the world.

Christmas activities



All the missing words end in ight.

(The first one is done for you).

- a) A Christmas song, Silent night.
- b) The opposite to dark is _____.
- c) As _____ as a feather.
- d) The boxer had a good _____.
- e) You are very tall, what _____ are you?
- f) The opposite to left is _____.
- g) I went on a diet and lost _____.
- h) Another word for maybe, _____.
- i) The opposite to wrong is _____.
- j) My feet hurt. These shoes are a bit _____.
- k) Two weeks is also called a _____.
- l) 12 o' clock at night is called _____.

A **collective noun** is a word used for a group of something.

Example: A **team** of players

Match the correct group word with one of the groups below.

(The first one is done for you.)

List: **books, sticks, bees, flowers, hounds, singers, rubbish, thread, flats, elephants**

- A herd of elephants
- a hive of _____
- a bunch of _____
- a pack of _____
- a heap of _____
- a bundle of _____
- a choir of _____
- a library of _____
- a reel of _____
- a block of _____

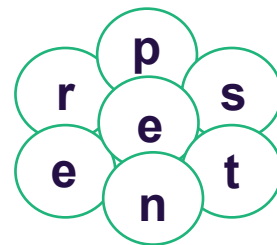
Compound words: When you put 2 words together to make a new word.

Match 2 words to make a new word.

(The first one is done for you.)

- | | | | |
|---|--------|-------|-----------|
| • | fire | chair | fireplace |
| • | foot | fly | _____ |
| • | arm | ever | _____ |
| • | tooth | place | _____ |
| • | how | one | _____ |
| • | land | ball | _____ |
| • | butter | ache | _____ |
| • | every | book | _____ |
| • | note | lord | _____ |

See how many new words you can make using the letters in this word.



Present _____

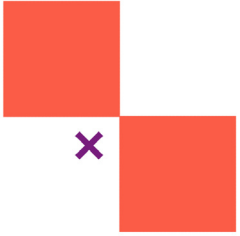
Word Search



See if you can find all these Christmas words that are hidden in the word search below. (The first one is done for you.)

Rudolph	holly	mince pie	ho ho ho	stocking
Santa Claus	turkey	angel	Merry Christmas	
tree	bells	pudding	cracker	cards

b q
e c
f l f o
e l j l
v y s s g s
i h t r e e
b g c a r d s y l p u d d i n g q h v a
j o m i n c e p i e n i r e y g d d t m
r u d o l p h i o y l m v a n g e l
m h m e r r y c h r i s t m a s
e w n j s a n t a c l a u s
u s t u r k e y l l b i
r p c r a c k e r u s r f v
w i d j n g p t h i o q h w
f s t o c k i n g y o v s f k u
y d s p e y k d h h w q j j
q a x o q n p z h o l l y z
l t c v s h h g e i
z x m e o u c f
m c f e



Dear Reader,

Thank you to everyone for reading our worksheet and for sending us some nice comments and ideas during the year.

We would like to invite you all to enter our Christmas competition. The closing date will be **31 January 2025**.

We wish you a very happy Christmas and a happy New Year.

Best Wishes,
Learn with NALA team

Competition



If you would like to be in with a chance to win a €25 book voucher, please answer this question:

In what year was the GAA set up?

Please send the **answer and your name**:

by phone or text to **087 624 6260**

or

by email to **learn@nala.ie**
(put the word competition in the subject bar)

or

by post to **Competition**
Freepost
NALA
Sandford Lodge
Ranelagh, Dublin 6

Closing date is 31 January 2025.

Good Luck!

The views expressed in That's Interesting! are not necessarily the views of NALA.