

The core task plus the first additional task: The life of Roger Casement

Learning aims

Firstly, to inform the students of a clear overview of who Roger Casement was and what significant events occurred in his life. This is presented to the students in four stages: Casement's early life, his activism, his nationalism and his death including the controversial 'black diaries'. Secondly, the obtaining and sharing of this information will train the students' abilities in reading comprehension through skimming and scanning plus develop language production via speaking/discussion exercises to present and share information.

The core task plus the first additional task description

Before the first full lesson, as a lead-in homework task, the students will be provided with one of four information cards, which must be split equally throughout the class as well as possible. For instance, in a class of 20 students, each card should be given to five random students, this will cover all four topics equally across the class. These information cards each ask two key questions respectively concerning a particular stage in Roger Casement's life. The cards also need to be accompanied by the text *The Butterfly Collector* by Rebecca Solnit. The students must be informed that they do not need to read the whole text. Instead, as a minimum, just the pages referenced on each card, which will provide enough information to answer their questions. However, the students can read the whole text if they choose, plus be allowed to research independently to support their reading of *The Butterfly Collector* and answer the questions more thoroughly. The students should make notes, which they must bring to use in a discussion activity during the first full lesson on Casement.

When the students return and have completed their homework reading comprehension tasks, they will then be grouped with the other students who drew the same card as them, for the first additional task, which is broken down into two-stages. The initial task involves the groups discussing the answers to their questions, they should share the information they have found, providing evidence if necessary, and unify their answers. This may require additional support from the teacher if major discrepancies arise. Once each group has fully understood their area of Casement's life, the teacher has the choice to move on to one of two additional speaking tasks. The first option is for each group to present their area of Casement's life to the class in order, then field questions. Alternatively, create a jigsaw task, where representatives from each of the four groups are put together and then present each area of Casement's life to each other, and answer any questions the other members of the group may have.

At the end of this activity, the teacher could field additional questions from the class concerning areas of Casement's life which are still unclear. However, perhaps opening these questions to the class first may be an effective strategy, to see whether anyone knows the answers or has an opinion, to create further discussion.

Prerequisites: as this task presents an introduction and overview of Casement's life, there are no prerequisites for this task.

Required material: all the students would need beyond the handouts would be either paper and pen or an electronic device to make some notes to bring into class and then again for further note taking during the activities.

Main types of student activity/output: reading comprehension (core) and language production (first additional task)

Key Skills: reading (core) and speaking (first additional task)

Primary text:

Solnit, Rebecca. "The Butterfly Collector." *A Book of Migrations: Some Passages in Ireland*. 1997. Rev. ed. London: Verso, 2011. 38–60.

Further reading:

This text by Kirkland presents additional perspective on Roger Casement's life, from a more subjective angle. However, the style of writing is more advanced than *The Butterfly Collector*, so is only suitable for students at the higher end of C1 to C2 level.

Kirkland, Richard. "Rhetoric and (Mis)Recognitions: Reading Casement." *Irish Studies Review* 7.2 (1999): 163–172.

This biography provides a basic outline (in one page) of Casement's life, which could also be used as a timeline for reference during the whole modular teaching unit.

Biletz, Frank A. "Casement, Sir Roger (1864–1916)." *Historical Dictionary of Ireland*. *Historical Dictionaries of Europe*. Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2014. 69–70.