An ambitious mother, a boy in love, a lonely older man, a cynical intellectual and a girl who dreams of a life in another country are just a few of Joyce’s Dubliners. In these realistic tales, Joyce reveals the hopes, fears and disappointments of his characters. He also shows us turn-of-the-century Dublin in fascinating detail. This selection of eight stories from Dubliners includes Eveline, Araby and a two-part adaptation of Joyce’s novella, The Dead.

In this reader you will find:
- Information about James Joyce’s life
- Sections focusing on background and context
- CLIL History
- Glossary of difficult words
- Comprehension activities
- FCE-style activities
- Exit test

Tags
Irish Literature

Eli Readers is a beautifully illustrated series of timeless classics and specially-written stories for learners of English.
Introducing *Dubliners*

*Dubliners* is a collection of short stories, although all the stories are interconnected and the book is intended to be read from beginning to end. They were first (1) **published** as a collection in 1914. The stories are all (2) **set** in and around Dublin and most of the characters in the stories are from the middle classes, (3) **like** Joyce himself. The reader can find other connections, too. For example, characters experience ‘epiphanies’ – moments when they (4) **recognize** the truth about themselves. Joyce uses irony and humour when describing his characters and the details of their ordinary, everyday lives. This (5) **type** of description makes his characters and settings extremely realistic. Joyce uses a wide (6) **range** of techniques to bring his stories to life and many critics think he used *Dubliners* to (7) **practise** with different writing skills.
Vocabulary

2 The main themes in *Dubliners* are paralysis, corruption, death, growth and life. Use your dictionary to complete the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOUN</th>
<th>VERB</th>
<th>ADJECTIVE(S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>paralysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corruption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>death</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>growth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>life</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3a Match the adjectives in Box A with the possible opposites in Box B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BOX A</th>
<th>BOX B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 dead</td>
<td>a asleep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 unusual</td>
<td>b dry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 moist</td>
<td>c bearable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 discoloured</td>
<td>d bright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 dull</td>
<td>e alive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 awake</td>
<td>f interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 intolerable</td>
<td>g normal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3b Now work in pairs to discuss things that you find *unusual* and *intolerable*.

Speaking

4 Work in pairs. Dublin is, of course, the capital of Ireland. Talk in pairs about capital cities, thinking about:

- famous sights and landmarks
- streets
- bridges
- shops
- rivers
- parks
- buildings
- theatres
There was no hope for him this time: it was his third stroke*. Night after night I had passed the house (it was vacation time) and studied the lighted square of the window: and night after night I had found it lighted in the same way, evenly. If he was dead, I thought, I would see the reflection of the candles in the window, as I knew that two candles must be set at the head of a corpse*. Every night as I gazed* up at the window I said softly to myself the word paralysis*. It had always sounded strange to my ears, like the word gnomon in the Euclid and the word simony* in the Catechism. But now paralysis sounded evil. It filled me with fear, and yet I wanted to be nearer to it and to look at its deadly work.

Old Cotter was sitting in front of the fire, smoking, when I came downstairs for my supper. While my aunt was filling my bowl he said, as if returning to something he’d said earlier:

‘No, I wouldn’t say he was exactly … but there was something strange … there was something unusual about him. I’ll tell you my opinion.’

He began to smoke his pipe, probably arranging his opinion in his mind. Old fool*! When we first knew him he used to be rather interesting, talking about unusual things; but I soon grew tired of him and his boring stories about where he used to work.

stroke  a medical condition which often stops movement and speech

paralysis  inability to move

corpse  a dead body

simony  buying or selling church benefits

to gaze  to look at something for a long time

fool  idiot; silly person
FOCUS ON...

James Joyce (1882 – 1941)

James Joyce was an Irish writer. He is considered one of the most important novelists of the twentieth century. Besides novels, Joyce also wrote short stories, poetry, essays and one play. He lived in Europe for most of his adult life.

Early Life

James Joyce was born on 2nd February 1882 in a suburb of Dublin. He was the oldest of ten children. The family was Roman Catholic and middle class and Joyce was sent to a famous private college in County Kildare, for his education. When the family got into financial difficulty, Joyce returned to Dublin and attended a free school for a while, until he was given a free place at Belvedere College, another private school. In 1902, Joyce graduated from University College, Dublin with a degree in Modern Languages. Joyce was always interested in languages and had a working knowledge of Irish, English, French, German, Italian and Latin, at this stage in his life. As a young man, he also studied Norwegian, so that he could read the works of Ibsen. Later he studied many more languages, including Hebrew, Chinese and Japanese.

Life in Europe

In 1903, he moved to Paris in order to study medicine, but soon moved home when his mother became ill. After his mother died, Joyce published some of his stories in Irish magazines, although they were not very well-received. In 1904, he met Nora Barnacle, from the west of Ireland and they left Ireland together. Joyce taught English in Trieste (now in Italy) and Pola (now in Croatia) and worked in a bank in Rome for a short time. On one of his trips back to Dublin, he started a cinema company there. It failed, and in 1912, he visited Dublin for the last time. Joyce and Nora Barnacle’s two children, Giorgio and Lucia, were born in Trieste. During the First World War, Joyce and his family lived in Zurich and, when the war was over, they moved again, this time to Paris. Throughout these years, Joyce had problems with his sight and had a number of operations. When Paris was occupied by German forces in 1940, the family returned to Zurich, where Joyce died in January 1941 after an operation.
Writing

Besides *Dubliners*, Joyce’s best-known works are *Ulysses*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and his final novel, *Finnegans Wake*. He also wrote a number of essays, poetry and his play, *Exiles*. Many readers think that *Ulysses* is Joyce’s greatest work. It is a highly innovative novel, based on the thoughts and actions of its central characters on one day, June 16th 1904. The date is interesting, as it was the day Joyce and Nora Barnacle first walked around Dublin together. Throughout *Ulysses*, Joyce experiments with different techniques, such as stream of consciousness, varying literary styles, heavy use of literary and classical references, as well as obsessive detail about Dublin itself. He continued this experimentation with *Finnegans Wake*, which is considered Joyce’s most difficult novel.

Contemporaries’ Opinions

Joyce found it difficult to find publishers for many of his novels and, as a result, he and Nora lived in poverty all their lives. The stories in *Dubliners*, for example, were not published together until 1914, although they were written and revised by 1906. Joyce found it difficult to find a mainstream publisher for *Ulysses*, and in some countries, including the United States, it was banned for a time. Many other modernist writers such as Ezra Pound admired Joyce very much, although some felt that *Finnegans Wake* was too difficult to read – Vladimir Nabokov called it “horrible”. Today, *Ulysses* is regarded as one of the finest novels of the twentieth century.

Task

Complete the form with the information about James Joyce.

Name: __________________________________________

Date of Birth: _________________________________

Place of Birth: _______________________________

Degree: ______________________________________

Wife’s Name: _________________________________

Year of Final Dublin Visit: _____________________

Children: ____________________________________

Four Important Works: __________________________

Place and Date of Death: _______________________

Joyce in Zurich, c. 1918
The Rise of Irish Nationalism

Irish Nationalism was the movement for an Ireland independent of British rule.

British Rule

Ireland, or parts of Ireland, had been under English, then British rule for centuries. Many of the lords in Ireland were English or Scottish by birth and they had been “planted” there since Tudor times, in order to strengthen British rule. This added a religious element to the Irish question later, as the English and Scottish lords were mainly Protestant, whereas the Irish lords were mainly Roman Catholic. There was a separate Irish parliament until 1800, when it was combined with the parliament in London. In the eighteenth century, many of the lords, particularly those from the north or around Dublin, had regarded London as the cultural capital of Ireland, but ideas were beginning to change. There was a terrible famine in Ireland in the years 1845-1849 and many felt that Britain, then a very rich country, did nothing to help the people of Ireland and about a million people died in the famine.

Dublin during the Easter Rising, 1916
The Celtic Revival
An important part of the move towards a greater national identity in Ireland was the Irish or Celtic Revival movement. In *The Dead*, Miss Ivors is a Revivalist – she wants Gabriel to recognize that his language is Irish and that he should visit Ireland before travelling in Europe. Joyce is ironic about the Revival in *A Mother*, when he talks about people having Irish lessons and meeting up to gossip in English but say goodbye in Irish. As a result of the Irish Revival and other similar cultural movements, people began to value and protect the Gaelic tradition of language, art, music and sport. This was particularly a Dublin movement, however, and rural areas continued as they always had.

Demands for Home Rule
At the time that Joyce was writing *Dubliners*, there had been several attempts at armed rebellion, but most people were in favour of constitutional reform leading to Irish Home Rule. In the north, however, there was strong opposition to the idea from the six counties of Ireland known as Ulster: they wanted to stay part of Great Britain. The main leader of the home rule campaign, at the time Joyce was growing up, was Charles Stewart Parnell. His career ended with a divorce scandal and, after that, the campaign suffered from lack of leadership, leading to an element of paralysis in Dublin politics. The more radical groups grew in popularity, but there were deep divisions and eventually two opposing armed groups – the Ulster Volunteers and the Irish Volunteers – were founded.

Partition
After the First World War, the British position in Ireland, particularly in the south, became impossible to maintain. They had put down a rebellion, The Easter Rising, during the war and had placed Ireland under military control. At elections for the British parliament in 1918, Sinn Féin, a new political party, won a large number of votes everywhere except Ulster. They refused to go to London and declared a republic. The British refused to accept this and a bloody civil war broke out. Eventually, it was agreed that the six counties in Ulster should remain with Britain and the south should become a separate state.

Task
**Internet research**
There were many famous leaders in the early days of Irish Nationalism. Some of them were Charles Stewart Parnell, Wolfe Tone, James Connolly and Michael Collins. Find out about one of these leaders and do some Internet research to write a mini-biography.