



Tithe an
Oireachtais
Houses of the
Oireachtas

Education Programme

DEMOCRACY

HOW DEMOCRACY WORKS IN IRELAND AND THE CONSTITUTION

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

The way in which our Democracy in Ireland works is outlined in a very important document called 'The Constitution' or Bunreacht na hÉireann.

This is the second version of the constitution of the state since independence. It replaced the original 1922 version of the Constitution of the Irish Free State and came into force on 29 December 1937 following what is called a national plebiscite or vote held on 1 July 1937.

The opening lines read, 'We, the people of Ireland...' because in a democracy all power comes from the people. This document was accepted by the people of Ireland by 75.8% to 24.2% in 1937.

The Constitution defines our system of government and it outlines what constitutional rights we have as Irish citizens, therefore we have what's called a 'constitutional democracy' in Ireland.

The Constitution is divided up into Articles. Each Article sets out an important rule or law. There are 50 articles in total.

Living in a Democracy gives you certain rights and these are protected under the Constitution. Sometimes people think that democracy is only about how the majority rule. This is not strictly true. In a democracy decisions are made based on what the majority agree, but the rights and freedoms of the minority must always be respected and listened to as well.

Why do you think Ireland being in a Democracy is important? How important is the Constitution?