

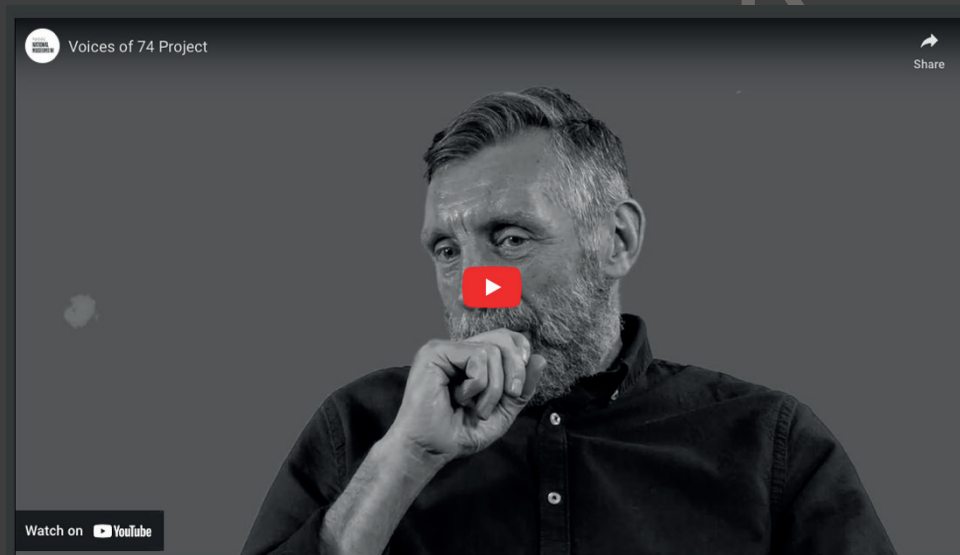
VOICES OF '74 – EDUCATION RESOURCE

The following resources have been developed in partnership with National Museums NI, Nottingham Trent University, the History Teachers Association of Northern Ireland (HTANI) and the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), and are designed to assist teachers in delivering GCSE History lessons in and around the turbulent events of 1974 in Northern Ireland.

Using the Oral History material of the *Voices of '74* digital exhibition, they have been created to encourage pupils and teachers to engage with the testimonies as starting points for the exploration of this pivotal period. The resources have been developed to mirror the structure of the digital exhibition to facilitate ease of use and contain a wide range of diverse and interactive activities.

The majority of the testimonies are to be found on the central [Voices of '74](#) digital exhibition, but there are also extracts that are taken from the extended videos that are also available [online](#). We have indicated when this is the case. What follows is an extensive range of material; we are by no means suggesting that teachers and pupils need to cover everything, and instead encourage users to pick and choose what activities and resources work best for their specific needs.

We would encourage viewing the exhibition trailer below as a useful starting point to whet the appetite. Click on image below to access film.



Nottingham Trent
University



NI
ULSTER MUSEUM

VOICES OF '74 – CONTEXT

TEACHER OVERVIEW

The UWC Strike of 1974 did not happen in isolation. Events in the late 1960s and early 1970s brought about huge changes to life in Northern Ireland. The outbreak of the Troubles had a negative impact on everyone in the country and totally transformed people's lives. Various political changes, culminating in the introduction of Direct Rule, were viewed as an opportunity for some but were a real challenge for others. During this period the media spotlight was very focused on Northern Ireland, giving an intensified significance to events. People's awareness of their own identity was heightened and there was much more concentration on the differences between people.

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- 1) Did the people of Northern Ireland become much more aware of local events in the period 1968-1972, leading to an 'inward turn'?
- 2) How important was the sense amongst Unionists that they were losing control in Northern Ireland as a reason for the Ulster Workers' Council Strike?

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Pupils should have some knowledge of:



- The Civil Rights Movement
- The Reforms introduced as a result
- The creation of new Political Parties in the early 1970s
- The emergence of paramilitary groups and key events of the Troubles, particularly in 1971 and 1972
- The introduction of Direct Rule

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of the activities pupils should

- Understand that NI society was transformed in the period 1968-72, particularly socially and politically
- Understand that people developed a heightened sense of their own identity and for some there was a feeling that this was under threat
- Know why some Unionists felt that they were losing control in Northern Ireland and understand how this was a cause of the UWC strike

ACTIVITIES

- 1) Pupils complete Zone of Awareness task to help them focus on what is happening around them and think about what holds most significance for them
- 2) Watch video clip – [Context: Part 2.](#) 
- 3) Pupils should read selection of extracts and use them to complete table - could be done individually, in pairs or in a group
- 4) Discuss pupil findings as a class, then complete short question
- 5) Optional exam style question
- 6) 'Smartphone' discussion
- 7) Watch video clip – [Context: Part 1](#) 
- 8) Pupils should read selection of extracts and use them to complete diagram on losing control - could be done individually, in pairs or in a group
- 9) In pairs or small groups carry out sorting activity on which events from 1968-72 were most concerning for unionists
- 10) Answer question on how events 1968 – 72 were a cause of the UWC strike – this could be answered at the end of the whole study for a more in-depth answer.
- 11) Optional exam style questions

ZONES OF AWARENESS

What is happening in the world this week?


What is happening in the UK and Ireland this week?

**What is happening in
Northern Ireland this week?**

**What is happening in
school this week?**

ACTIVITY 1 - EVENTS 1968-72

Inquiry: Did the people of Northern Ireland become much more aware of local events in the period 1968-1972, leading to an 'inward turn'?

 Consider the extracts below, some of which are taken from the extended versions available online ([Context i](#) / [Context ii](#)).

Source A – Eileen Weir

I can honestly say I knew nothing about nothing anywhere else. It was doorstep, Shankill Road, you know, it wasn't even Bangor, you know, it wasn't anywhere else. It was it was Shankill Road because where I lived in the Shankill, I was between the Springfield Road and the Crumlin Road. I lived just off Tennent Street. So our fear was great because the police station was in Tennent Street, so they could come up from, before the interface was up and there were no walls up then, so they could drive straight up Cooper Street, up Lawnbrook Avenue right up in, into the Bone, in Ardoyne. But So we had a fear that we could be attacked at any time. The only thing that I can remember is the miners' strike. That's the only thing that I can really remember what was happening, outside of the Shankill Road ah, where I had no focus on what was happening in the rest of the world.

Source B – Don Anderson

Most of the police were in Belfast and these people were buckling and they didn't have replacements. And I watched a complete street in Londonderry burning from end to end, and it was the first time in my life I'd seen burning buildings and not a fire engine in sight. Nobody coming to put the fire out. The blaze was spreading from one building to the other. I watched this and you can imagine what the effect on me as a young man was. I said, this is society falling to pieces.

Source C – Mervyn Gibson

I remember one particular case where my Granda had died and my mother and father went into the Solicitors in town and I was waiting outside for them and it was the Athletic Stores just at the corner of Queen Street. I was standing and looked in the window at all the things I wanted and couldn't afford and I turned my back and a mighty bang went off and it was the first one hundred pound bomb in Belfast, and the curved windows in the Athletic Stores, they just went to pieces and thankfully they went almost like dust and I wasn't injured, but I was covered in glass dust. But that sort of became the norm in many ways. Bomb scares etc.. You were, you just got used to them basically.

Source D – Henry Patterson

But in in this period, the, I mean, '68, you had all the influence of the sort of events in in Paris and so forth and you had the influx of, of like Italian, French students and that coming to observe.

Source E – Jim Roddy

I'd be wrong to say I could recall anything else in the world, other than some football facts or whatever. Because football was my thing. You know, the Mexico World Cup of 1970 I guess would have been one that would have jumped out at me. Life revolved around [what was happening here]. There wasn't a day that went by that we got up in the morning went out on the street that the helicopter wasn't sitting so low that you know, it was one of these bubble helicopters, you could nearly see the faces of the people inside them they were that low or the tanks weren't about or there wasn't a riot taking place or, you know, it was all within touching distance. And that that became the centre of our life.

Source F – Erskine Holmes

There was a general belief, I think, that membership of Europe had economic benefits to Northern Ireland. But there are some who, in spite of that, thought, well, those economic benefits could equally well come from not being in Europe.

Source G – Dawn Purvis

Yeah and I remember actually people talking about evacuating us to Scotland or England if things got really bad. So there was a whole lot of talk about evacuation and evacuation plans, am, and my granny stockpiling tins of this and that and the other. [...] I remember Mary Peters, I remember the, the Olympics and Mary Peters winning. I remember watching snooker on TV because we had a black and white TV that somebody had give us.

Source H – Nelson McCausland

And the frequency of killings was becoming so common that it, it didn't fully register with you, day after day after day. And if you see something in the newspaper one day and then it's superseded by another event the next day, it's not sinking in in the way that it would now where there would be maybe a week of newspaper coverage. And you look back at it and think, was a human life simply covered in five lines in a newspaper? In some cases not even a report of the funeral, just, just the actual shooting. Those were horrendous times.

Source I – Dawn Purvis

You know, it felt like nearly at least once a week we were woken out of our sleep and evacuated out of the house, one, one, at one stage it was our next-door neighbour's car and they got us all out of the house. And ran us physically, you know, half lifting us, half trailing us to Betty Hogg's house at the bottom of the street, because it was one of the biggest houses that could take everybody. And just these people huddled and these kids with big, wide eyes, you know, looking around each other, you know, what's happening, what are we doing here? Then thankfully, that turned out to be a bit of a hoax and they carried out a controlled explosion and within 45 minutes, an hour, you know, it was back to bed.

Source J – Jim Dillon

O'Neill came in as Prime Minister and obviously he was a much more moderate prime minister than what we had before he tried to woo the minority community, for want of a better word and it didn't really work. It didn't really work with them and it didn't really work with the community that should've been supporting him because he, he, he lost a bit of the trust that he should have had. He came on the television, I can well remember his crossroads speech, Ulster is at the crossroads and that that didn't really go down with the people, it probably went down with the moderates.

Source K – Douglas McIldoon

I spent the summer of '69, I was working in Butlin's. And at night you'd go and watch the Americans' landing, walking around the moon and things like that. And then there's this going on in Belfast.

Source L – Mike Nesbitt

The event I remember most was Bloody Friday and the BBC coverage at teatime and sitting at the tea table with my mother and my father and my sister, and watching that incredible, incredible shot of body parts being literally shovelled into a binbag. And I've actually seen that shot since. And I'm glad I did because over the years I began to doubt whether it actually had happened and I had actually seen it, but I had. No, I can remember it because all those explosions so quickly were incredibly frightening. Even though you were living through a conflict, this took it to a whole different level.

Which events from 1968-72 do the authors of the sources recall?

Sort them into the following categories:

Local Events – Troubles related	Local Events – Non-Troubles related
National Events (UK and Ireland)	World Events

Question: To what extent were the increasing violence and political changes becoming the centre of people’s lives in Northern Ireland by 1972?

Exam style question

Source B – Don Anderson

Most of the police were in Belfast and these people were buckling and they didn't have replacements. And I watched a complete street in Londonderry burning from end to end, and it was the first time in my life I'd seen burning buildings and not a fire engine in sight. Nobody coming to put the fire out. The blaze was spreading from one building to the other. I watched this and you can imagine what the effect on me as a young man was. I said, this is society falling to pieces.

Using the source and your contextual knowledge, give one reason that explains why the Troubles were having an increasing impact on people's lives by 1972.

_____ [2]

ACTIVITY 2 - THREATS TO UNIONISM

Inquiry: How important was the sense amongst Unionists that they were losing control in Northern Ireland as a reason for the Ulster Workers' Council Strike?



Consider the extracts below, some of which are taken from the extended versions available online (*Context i / Context ii*).

Source A – Nelson McCausland

Things that seemed to be there to be stable and permanent, were gradually disappearing. The disbandment of the Ulster Special Constabulary. It wasn't that you were encountering them every day. You weren't. They were really there on certain occasions, but it was quite a symbolic thing. You had all of the interventions from London, and you just were beginning to wonder, where is all this going?

Source B – Henry Patterson

First of all you've got RUC reform, you've abolition of the B Men, then RUC reform and then the beginning of the campaign, you know, with killing the first policemen in 1970, coming of British troops, there is a sense that the whole ... the state...which is true, it wasn't a perception it was reality...that the Unionist Party had lost control of the state and the British government was intervening but wasn't clear what its policies were[...] And then you got the abolition of Stormont. So within a period of two or three years, the whole settled framework of Unionism was sort of blown up. And then you have a very intensive Provisional campaign going on in '71, '70 in '71, particularly with the object of bringing about Direct Rule, which was successful. They brought about Direct Rule and it continued, the intense campaign. You had a campaign of loyalist violence and sectarian assassinations.

Source C – Bernadette McAliskey

I think the important starting point is that that 1969 was the arrival of the British army on the streets. So from 1969 till we get to the point of the loyalist worker strike in 74, we are in a position of increasing militarisation at every level. [...] People do tend looking back to totally forget that when we were in 1969, at that point when the British army arrived on the street, there was no Social Democratic and Labour Party. There was no big split in the control of the Ulster Unionist Party of the politics of Unionism. There was no provisional IRA. Those things didn't exist. So you have a very rapidly changing landscape of political infrastructure and military infrastructure between 1969 and 1974.

Source D – Mervyn Gibson

I specifically remember internment. So I witnessed internment. First hand, not 7 o'clock in the morning, when the doors were being rapped, but it didn't last just for an hour in the morning. It went on throughout the day. So we seen the tension and seen and from a unionist point of view, they were dealing with those who were murdering. They were dealing with terrorist organisations. And we were pleased and internment for us was a good thing. Now you can look at it back and say the intelligence wasn't there and etc. It was a recruiting ground for the IRA, all those things. But if you live in the community that was under constant bomb, not only the community but the city centre, not only the Protestant community but the people from Northern Ireland were under threat from the IRA and violence form the IRA. So, internment coming along was going to help stop that that it was a good thing at the time.

Source E – Paul Arthur

And you saw a complete breakdown in relations between Stormont and Westminster. In comes Direct Rule and direct rule was a massive kick in the teeth to Unionism, to the psychology of Unionism, to everything that Unionism stood for. You had, for example, William Craig, who went on to found the Vanguard party saying that no British government can do that. There's a convention from about 1923 that we rule Northern Ireland and you must stay outside. And of course when direct rule does come in, the then Prime Minister Brian Faulkner has to resign with this said no government that is doesn't control its own security, doesn't have any control. So he resigns and you go into this constitutional abyss.

Source F – Eileen Weir

I can remember, you know marching up the hill and down the hill again at that time because of the fear of losing what we, what we had and that, that was, you know, becoming a United Ireland.

Source G – Dawn Purvis

I remember Bloody Friday quite clearly because my mum's sister, one of my aunts, had been in town and we were in the street playing and the bombs sort of started to go off and from where we were you could see the plumes of smoke, you know, going and then you could hear another bomb, and then you could hear another bomb. And it was like, it was like panic in the street, you know. And I remember one woman had like a wee radio and she had it tuned in to the police messages listening to what was going on and what was happening and oh, my goodness, there's another one, oh my God, there's another one, you know, and just this despair, I think, and real panic. And I remember actually feeling it myself because of course my mum thought her sister was missing.

Source H – William Mitchell

En bloc almost 30 of them moved from it being a tartan gang into a Paramilitary Unit literally overnight. In fact, I know from experience they actually all did it the day before Bloody Friday on 20th July 1972. That's when the Woodstock Tartan ultimately became East Belfast Red Hand Commando.

Which events from 1968-72 made some Unionists feel that they were losing control?



GROWING CONCERNS FOR UNIONISTS, 1968-1972

Cut out the cards and discuss in your group how each one might have been a cause for concern for Unionists. Place them in order from the most concerning to the least concerning and be prepared to justify your decisions. (Perforated line on all boxes to be cut out).



VOICES OF '74

Split in Unionism with creation of new political parties - Vanguard, DUP

VOICES OF '74

Formation of Civil Rights Movement

VOICES OF '74

Disbanding of B-Specials

VOICES OF '74

Five Point Programme

VOICES OF '74

Demand that Stormont give up control of security issues

VOICES OF '74

Internment

VOICES OF '74

Introduction of Direct Rule

VOICES OF '74

Introduction of One Man One Vote

VOICES OF '74

Formation of a new Nationalist party, SDLP

VOICES OF '74

Growing violence from the Provisional IRA

VOICES OF '74

Arrival of British troops

VOICES OF '74

Loyalist violence

Explain how the sense amongst Unionists that they were losing control in Northern Ireland could have caused the Ulster Workers' Council Strike?

Exam style Questions

Source E – Paul Arthur

And you saw a complete breakdown in relations between Stormont and Westminster. In comes Direct Rule and direct rule was a massive kick in the teeth to Unionism, to the psychology of Unionism, to everything that Unionism stood for. You had, for example, William Craig, who went on to found the Vanguard party saying that no British government can do that. There's a convention from about 1923 that we rule Northern Ireland and you must stay outside. And of course when direct rule does come in, the then Prime Minister Brian Faulkner has to resign with this said no government that is doesn't control its own security, doesn't have any control. So he resigns and you go into this constitutional abyss.

Using the source and your contextual knowledge, give two reasons that explain why some Unionists were very worried about the situation in Northern Ireland by 1972.

1. _____

2. _____

Name the leader of the Ulster Vanguard.

[1]

Name the leader of the DUP.

[1]

Give one reason why the British government introduced Direct Rule to Northern Ireland in 1972.

[1]

Give one reason for the introduction of internment in 1971.

[1]

Give one response to the events of Bloody Sunday, 1972.

[1]

Describe one response to the introduction of Internment in 1971.

[2]

Describe one response to the introduction of Direct Rule in 1972.

[2]

Explain the reasons for the introduction of Direct Rule in 1972.

[9]

VOICES OF '74 – PRELUDE

TEACHER OVERVIEW

Following the introduction of Direct Rule in March 1972, the British government sought to re-establish a government to Northern Ireland. This was based on a 'community government' (power-sharing) made up of both Unionists and Nationalists along with an undefined role for the Republic of Ireland. This 'Sunningdale Experiment' was to last less than 6 months. Through six different activities, this section provides an overview of the details of power-sharing, the role of the ROI along with their contribution to the Unionist-led UWC Strike of May 1974. Students will reflect on the relative significance of each of these factors.

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- Why did the Ulster Workers Council strike happen?
- To what extent was power-sharing and the Council of Ireland a factor in the strike?
- Could the strike have been averted?

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students will have studied the 'Context' session which would have led up to and included Direct Rule

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As a result of the activities pupils should be able to:

- Identify the three key conditions on which any government would return to Northern Ireland.
- Summarise the results and significance of the June 1973 Assembly election.
- Assign the different opinions of the role of the Council of Ireland.
- Assess several sources on the reasons for the UWC strike in May 1974.

CONTENT

 Access Clips: [Prelude: Part 1](#) and [Prelude: Part 2](#)

Several data-based exercises in which students must extract information from sources (including those from the video). These can be done on an individual and group level.

Teachers may also use these resources as 'student led' or 'pre-learning' before they study the actual events of the UWC strike.

TIMELINE

March 1972-British Government introduces Direct Rule in Northern Ireland taking away responsibility for the governing of the province from local politicians.


June 1973-Elections held for a new Northern Ireland Assembly. A majority of those elected support the idea of power-sharing.

December 1973-Sunningdale Conference outlines the functioning of power-sharing and a role for the Republic of Ireland.

February 1974-UK General Election. 11/12 MPs returned stand on an anti-Sunningdale platform.

May 1974-Start of the Ulster Workers' Council Strike in opposition to Sunningdale.

Following the imposition of Direct Rule by the British government in March 1972, attempts were made to try and restore devolution. The British government outlined three main conditions that must be met for this to occur:

- *A 'community government' made up of both Unionists and Nationalists. This was known as 'power-sharing.'*
 - *A role for the Republic of Ireland in the political affairs of Northern Ireland.*
 - *The consent principle in which NI would remain part of the UK for so long as the majority of people agreed.*
- 

ACTIVITY 1

Consider the oral history extracts below.

What key concerns for Unionism emerge from these testimonies?

Source 1 – Jim Dillon

I remember the talk about it and the leaders going to Sunningdale, Brian Faulkner and those those type of people. And I think Sunningdale probably would have been more acceptable, let's put it that way, if it hadn't have been for the Council of Ireland input into it, because the Council of Ireland seemed to be given the Republic of Ireland, it was then called the Free State, a say in the affairs of Northern Ireland, and that was taboo no Unionist was prepared to tolerate it accept the very, very moderate ones, and the moderate ones were getting less at this stage. That was a red line they just went they went that step too far, in my opinion.

Source 2 – Eamon Hanna

Well, they said it was the involvement of Ireland but I think a lot, not, not, not the Faulkner Unionists, but the, the other Unionists who were anti-Faulkner, I think, I think power-sharing stuck in their throats.

Source 3 – Maurice Mills

Well, it was just a straight avenue to an all-Ireland arrangement and in no way were we willing to countenance that whatsoever, not even in our dreams. So that was the position and that's why, that's why in actual fact the Workers' Council came into being because of that.

Source 4 – Paul Arthur

Well, I think what happens is that the Council of Ireland becomes the easy one to deal with because the Council of Ireland challenged everything that Unionism had fought from 1920 onwards because it appeared, whether it did or not, it appeared to give a role for an Irish government inside Northern Ireland. [...] So that again raises Unionist fears so that, if you like, was the Trojan horse with which we could undermine power-sharing. And that was the line in which they worked, that they were not opposed to sharing power with Roman Catholics, but they would not under any circumstances, have any form of rule, no matter how indirect from Dublin. So the Irish Dimension was the one that they played on and very, very successfully. No question that the vast majority of them were opposed to power-sharing.

Source 5 – Nelson McCausland

You began to wonder, will the IRA win here? Will they force us into a united Ireland? And for us a united Ireland meant being ruled by people like them and by people who had sympathized with them and been very close to them. Well, our perception was that they would see it as a major advance, but all these things in our minds were seen as, they'll see a major advance, but it's only a stepping stone. It's not stopping stone, it's a stepping stone to ultimately a united Ireland.

ACTIVITY 2

Transform each of the three conditions into an image (Magenta Principle)

Area	Image
A 'community government' made up of both Unionists and Nationalists.	
A role for the Republic of Ireland in the political affairs of Northern Ireland	
The consent principle in which NI would remain part of the UK for so long as the majority of people agreed.	

ACTIVITY 3

In June 1973, elections took place to a new Northern Ireland Assembly. Looking at the outcome of the election, decide if the following statements are 'Correct' or 'Incorrect.'

PARTY	UNIONIST/ NATIONALIST	POWER- SHARING	SEATS	% OF VOTES
FAULKNER UNIONISTS	UNIONIST	YES	24	29.3
UUUC (UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COUNCIL)	UNIONIST	NO	26	32.6
SDLP	NATIONALIST	YES	19	22.1
ALLIANCE	OTHER	YES	8	9.2
NI LABOUR PARTY	OTHER	YES	1	2.6

Statement		Correct	Incorrect	If incorrect, re-write the statement to correct it.
1	Most parties who stood for election supported power-sharing			
2	The majority of those elected supported power-sharing			
3	A majority of Nationalists supported power-sharing			
4	A majority of Unionists supported power-sharing			

ACTIVITY 4

Sunningdale

Now that there was a majority of those elected to the new Assembly who were in support of power-sharing, the British and Irish governments along with the pro-power-sharing parties met at Sunningdale in England to discuss the role which would be played by the Republic of Ireland.

No anti-power-sharing parties attended this conference. It was agreed that the role for the Republic of Ireland would be through a new institution called the Council of Ireland which would have a 'consultative and reviewing role' on issues affecting NI and the ROI. One of the main difficulties was the fact that of the key signatories of the deal, they all had different opinions upon what the actual role of the Council of Ireland would be. This was to have serious consequences for the stability of any future Northern Ireland government.

Even though most Unionists did not support power-sharing, the majority of those elected did. Do you think this would be a stable basis for any future power-sharing government in Northern Ireland?

Discuss with your partner/group and provide a response for each argument.

ACTIVITY 5

Read the following views of the Council of Ireland and identify if they were from the perspective of:

- The British Government,
- The Irish Government,
- Pro-power sharing Unionists,
- Pro-power-sharing Nationalists

Their opinion of the Council of Ireland	Who am I?
Merely an 'advisory' body. A 'token' gesture to deal with economic issues.	
A great way to increase political links with the Republic and a step towards a United Ireland. It would be a vehicle that would trundle(push) Unionists into a united Ireland	
It will hopefully encourage more Nationalists to become involved in the political process as they see a role for the Republic of Ireland in the affairs on Northern Ireland	
This will not only improve relations between us and the North but will also lay the foundations for eventual reunification.	

ACTIVITY 6

Following Sunningdale, the new power-sharing Assembly and Executive was set up on 1st January 1974. The next month, there was a UK General Election called in which Northern Ireland would send 12 Members of Parliament to London to represent its views. Anti Sunningdale Unionists (UUUC) made the election about the Sunningdale Agreement (power-sharing and the role of the ROI). They won 11/12 seats showing a clear lack of support among the Unionist population for the Sunningdale Agreement. When their call for new elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly were rejected by the British government, they then carried out the Ulster Workers' Council Strike in May 1974. There is an on-going debate as to whether the UWC Strike came about due to the power-sharing element of Sunningdale or the role for the Republic of Ireland through the Council of Ireland.

Looking at the following resource, answer the following questions:

Q1-What % of Protestants supported the idea of power-sharing?

Q2-What % of Protestants felt that the Council of Ireland was a bad idea?

Q3-Do you think that if power-sharing had functioning WITHOUT the inclusion of the Council of Ireland, it would have remained stable? Use the opinion poll and your own knowledge to support your answer

Results of the opinion poll on the Sunningdale Agreement taken between 31 March and 7 April 1974

(i) Do you approve or disapprove of power within the Executive being shared?

	<i>Protestant %</i>	<i>Catholic %</i>
<i>Approve strongly</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>78</i>
<i>Just approve</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Don't know</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Just disapprove</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Disapprove strongly</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>1</i>

(ii) Do you think that the Sunningdale proposal for a Council of Ireland is a good or bad idea?

	<i>Protestant %</i>	<i>Catholic %</i>
<i>Good idea</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>72</i>
<i>Bad idea</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Have not heard of proposals</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Don't know</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>18</i>

Source: Gillespie, Sandra, Northern Ireland and its neighbours since 1920 (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1999), p. 122.

ACTIVITY 7

Read through each of the sources and complete the following table to explain whether Unionist opposition to the Sunningdale Agreement was based on power-sharing, the COI, or both?

Source	Power-sharing	COI	Both	Key words/phrases from the source which supports your choice
1				Sunningdale probably would have been more acceptable, let's put it that way, if it hadn't been for the Council of Ireland
2				the other Unionists who were anti-Faulkner, I think, I think power-sharing stuck in their throats.
3				it was just a straight avenue to an all-Ireland arrangement and in no way were we willing to countenance that
4				Council of Ireland challenged everything that Unionism had fought from 1920 onwards. the vast majority of them were opposed to power-sharing.
5				It's not stopping stone, it's a stepping stone to ultimately unite Ireland.

Extension Q- If Articles 2 & 3 (in which the ROI claimed control of Northern Ireland) were removed from the Irish constitution before the COI was set up, do you think this would have been enough to prevent the UWC strike? Use extracts from each of the sources to support your argument.

KEY WORDS

Taboo: A taboo is something that is forbidden or not allowed by social customs or rules. It is often a subject or behaviour that people feel strongly about and avoid talking about or doing because it is considered inappropriate or offensive.

Red-Line: A Red Line is a limit or boundary that should not be crossed. If someone notes that something is a Red Line, it means it is a strict rule or condition that, if broken, will lead to serious consequences.

Countenance: Countenance means to support or approve of something. For example, if you say a teacher will not countenance bad behaviour, it means the teacher will not tolerate or allow it.

Trojan Horse: A Trojan Horse is something that seems good or harmless but can be viewed as dangerous or harmful, an attempt to deceive. The term comes from a story in ancient Greek mythology where the Greeks used a wooden horse to trick their enemies and sneak into the city of Troy. Today, it can refer to anything that is used to deceive or trick someone.

PLENARY

From March 1972-May 1974 the British government created plans which would provide the basis for any future political settlement in Northern Ireland. The inclusion of both power-sharing and a role for the Republic of Ireland were components which had a mixture of political reactions. Whether or not it was power-sharing itself or a role for the ROI which brought about the UWC Strike is still a contentious historical point.

VOICES OF '74 – STRIKE (A)

STRIKE: PART 1 AND PART 2 - MOTIVES, ACTIONS AND EARLY IMPACT

TEACHER OVERVIEW

The Ulster Workers' Council Strike resulted from growing anger amongst Unionists and loyalists toward the implementation of the Sunningdale Agreement and power-sharing at Stormont. The strike was organised by the Ulster Workers' Council and the Ulster Army Council, a group which included loyalist paramilitaries. There is debate as to whether "strike" is the best description for an action which sought to bring down a government and effect constitutional change. The action began slowly but quickly picked up momentum as workers from key industries including power stations walked out. Soon the economy was brought to a near standstill and essential services affecting people's everyday lives were disrupted. To what extent people willingly supported the strike and what role intimidation played in forcing workers to comply, are still contested issues.

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- 1) Why did the UWC opt for the action they did?
- 2) Committed, Coerced or Defiant? Was intimidation the main reason for children not attending school and adults not attending work?
- 3) Did ordinary people suffer hardship during the UWC action?

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students should have an understanding of the circumstances surrounding the signing of the Sunningdale Agreement and the reasons why it provoked such a backlash amongst hardline Unionism.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The key resources for the study are the *Voices of '74* Clips, [Strike: Part 1](#) and [Strike: Part 2](#).


The work is structured around the three enquiry questions above.

Enquiry questions 1 and 2 draw largely on [Strike: Part 1](#).

Enquiry question 3 focuses on [Strike: Part 2](#).

The study is based on recent oral testimonies. Therefore, it is essential that at the outset of each enquiry students have the opportunity to **watch** the accounts as recorded.

EACH ENQUIRY REQUIRES STUDENTS TO:

- Test a range of accounts for their validity, reliability and utility
 - Balance, synthesise and evaluate differing perspectives and interpretations.
 - Supplement their understanding with reference to other relevant material.
 - Engage in discussion with peers (through whole class dialogue, pairs and group work) to clarify thinking and test their ideas against those of others.
 - Conclude by articulating a reasoned personal position on each of the enquiry questions.
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STRIKE: PART 1

ENQUIRY QUESTION 1:

WHY DID THE UWC OPT FOR THE ACTION THEY DID?



Watch and listen to *Strike: Part 1*. Collect class reactions / understandings of what is being said.

In pairs, read the introductory statement below. Then, examine each of the 10 cards and discuss answers to the accompanying questions. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online (*Strike i*).



The election results consolidated opposition to Sunningdale and signalled the inevitability of a move to active protest. The decision was made that this action should take the form of a strike. The following testimonies begin with a consideration of why this form of action was chosen.

Card 1 – Erskine Holmes

Yeah, well, speaking with my colleague or my comrade, Brian Garrett, um, he said that they used the term to him, um, um, the constitutional stoppage. Not, not a not a strike..... Well, it clearly wasn't an official strike. If it was not an official strike, then it's an unofficial strike. Far better to call it a constitutional stoppage.

*What do you understand to be the difference between a “strike” and a “constitutional stoppage”?
Why might it matter to some people what the action was called?*

Card 2 – Don Anderson

It was a weapon of last resort. They felt that the election result, which was anti Sunningdale, the February of '74 one, that electoral politics had deserted them in terms of what they needed. And all they could do was this.

Why a “last resort”?

Card 3 – Dawn Purvis

And I think that was the only reason that the strike was, was chosen just to put two fingers up to, to Whitehall and Westminster and say, look at the power we have, you know, and if you think you're going to impose anything over our heads, you're going to be sadly mistaken.

Does the speaker see the action as a protest or a show of strength?

Card 4 – Helen Crickard

Because they knew it, ... they knew they could bring the place to a standstill because they had the power. They worked in the electric board, they worked on the roads, they worked in education, they worked in health. [...] They had the power and that was what they were going to do.

Card 5 – Kenny McFarlane

And so they knew they had the workers on board and people were frustrated. [...] So all of a sudden you had these people who were, who were actually saying the working class has power, which was something which had never really, would never have really been thought of beforehand, so, and it gave, so the strike was a great way of doing it, it was actually it was a powerful way of doing it and it was more likely a bigger threat to Unionism than it was anybody else.

Cards 4 and 5 talk of having “power”? What do they see as the source of this power?

Card 6 – Douglas McIldoon

Well, I don't think the Unionist leaders chose that as a form of action. I think it was a grassroots thing that emerged within well, trade union circles, or people who were organising trade unions and they, they understood, well they understood trade unions structure, they understood mobilising working people, particularly in strategic industries. And the power industry being the obvious one.

According to Douglas McIldoon, where did the energy for the action come from?

Does this link in with Kenny McFarlane's view that "it was more likely a bigger threat to Unionism than it was anybody else"?

Card 7 – Chris McGimpsey

I think people, I feel like they were, probably they were seeing strikes generally, all over the world, you know, in Europe and South America and so on there were, strikes were taking place to change government policy and opinion.

Card 8 – Boyd Black

So maybe they thought that striking might be effective. And it turned out that it was.... Because Heath had been brought down by the miners' strike just before that, over the, they had a three day week and that yes, the power and that sort of it was a power shortage, there's was an electricity shortage that caused a three day week. So that have given them an insight.

How do cards 8 and 9 suggest that the action may have been shaped by events outside Northern Ireland?

Card 9 – Bernadette McAliskey

And, and I made the point that the loyalist strike and I made it, still make it, every worker on the face of this earth owns and controls their own labour and has a right to withdraw it at any time. So my complaint with the loyalist workers' strike was not that workers withdrew their labour, it was the reason for which they withdrew it.

What is Bernadette McAliskey's big problem regarding the motivation for the action?

Card 10 – John Rankin

Well, as you know there were a lot of killings and bombings going on. Probably the majority of it was coming from the Provisional IRA at the time, this was probably a peaceful way of doing it or as near enough peaceful as you could get without causing lives to be lost. Probably because they could bring the country to a standstill and people would stand up and recognise what's happening

Why might the background violence of the Troubles have influenced attitudes to the UWC action?

Using all the cards are there differences in the way those from Unionist and Nationalist backgrounds interpret the UWC action?

In small groups, take the statements below in turn and decide which card sources support the statement and which challenge it.

Reasons for choosing the action	Card evidence which supports the statement	Card evidence which challenges the statement
A direct act of defiance to the British Government and the power-sharing Executive		
A desperate attempt to have objections to power-sharing heard		
A concerted effort to bring Northern Ireland to an economic standstill		
The use by working class loyalism of organized labour and trade union principles to bring about change rather than rely on conventional politics		
Recognition that strikes had worked effectively in other places to force change		
The action was seen as a way of demonstrating Unionist / loyalist anger at continuing Republican violence against Protestants		
Rather than being just a STRIKE, it had the power to bring a CONSTITUTIONAL stoppage		

Return to the Enquiry Question. Read the section in the textbook which deals with the events of the strike or carry out some online research on the strike. Discuss which reasons above best answer the Enquiry Question.

*Individual work: In your view, based on your study, **Why did the UWC opt for the action they did?***


STRIKE: PART 1

ENQUIRY QUESTION 2:

COMMITTED, COERCED OR DEFIANT? WAS INTIMIDATION THE MAIN REASON FOR CHILDREN NOT ATTENDING SCHOOL AND ADULTS NOT ATTENDING WORK?

As the strike took hold, ordinary citizens, right across Northern Irish society had to deal with the inevitable fallout from the stoppage and decide where they stood regarding the call for action. The following testimonies focus on a series of reflections on the everyday experiences of schoolchildren and workers during the stoppage.

 Watch and listen to [Strike: Part 1](#) sections on “school” and “work”.

 In pairs, work through each of the extracts below. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online ([Strike i](#)).

SCHOOLCHILDREN

Extract 1 – Dawn Purvis

Even when the strike was on, we were sent to school and she came home from work one day and I will never forget it. And of course we were sent to bed as usual and the, the granny came up the street and knocked the door. We weren't long in bed so I was eerie wiggling at the window and I could hear voices and I don't know what happened anyway, but the next day - we were raging at having to go to school because nobody else was going to school. You know, and my mummy was going, you have to go to school because I have to go to work. So you have to go to school. Right, okay. So the next day we didn't, we didn't go to school and mum didn't go to work, but she was up early and she was away round to the phone box on Donegall Pass and then back around again and I said, where were you?

She said I had to go and phone, I think it was Mr. Park you called the man that owned the fruit shop to tell him that I couldn't come in today and are we not going to school, no you are not going to school, yeah, we're not going to school. Now it was, it wasn't until years later that the granny had visited Mum and said, you're still sending them kids to school and you're still going to work. And mum says, I have no other choice. I have no income. I can't look after my kids. And she says, You're not sending those kids to school tomorrow and you're not going to work. And my mum says, Well, who's going to feed my children? And she says, We will look after everybody in the street, but you're not going to work and them kids aren't going to school because if you do go to work, you'll have no house to come home to.

So and, and when she told me that, you know, a number of years later, I was absolutely horrified, absolutely horrified. There's a single woman on her own with three children and they're threatening to burn her out If she doesn't conform.

Extract 2 – Derek Moore

You know, we did become aware of what was happening probably because, you know, because we were off school, you know, we went to school, but the teachers led a walk out of the school that we were at Templemore and, you know, we, we had to walk home then I remember that because we had no school bus, you know. So I suppose we were aware of what was happening. But again, it was it seemed to be a very slow burner at the start.

Extract 3 – Kathy Wolf

And I always remember I was first year and my friend and I were at the front of the bus, gabbing to the bus driver because I would be I'd be very quiet and reserved, you know, but I can remember coming to the Boys Model and there was a UDA checkpoint there and because I was at the front of the bus you are sort of looking and going and all these guys and some with guns and you know balaclavas and that on. And one got on to the bus And he says to the bus driver, he grabbed me and the other girl and he put the gun to us and said get all these f***ing kids off the bus. And I can remember just being standing there petrified and the bus driver shouting to the kids you've got to get off the bus. Get off the bus quickly. And people starting to get off the bus and another guy coming along and saying, What are you doing? He says getting the kids off the bus we will take the bus and he goes, get them kids back on the F***ing bus and he says to the driver, get them kids back and don't be coming back here tomorrow. Or we won't, we won't be as lenient or we won't... whatever. And I can remember being gobsmacked on the bus and not kind of saying, the bus was, I remember the bus being totally quiet. Now, a double decker bus with as many school kids as rammed on there. I had never heard it quiet, the place was just quiet. Total silence. On the bus and you could hear sobbing. And I can remember getting off the bus and running up the road. And I remember crying as I was running, because I was absolutely petrified....

Extract 4 – William Mitchell

Well, so a number of us got together and said, wow, we're not going to school. What we did was we went into school mounted a protest and all immediately got up on a given time that we had all prearranged and just completely marched out of school. And you had all the teachers across the playground towards the front gates out, all back. into class, aye no chance, steamrolled over the top of them. [...] No, no, we didn't go back to school at all until the strike was called off. In actual fact not taking any a glorification in any of this. But what did we do? We marched to the local Catholic school, and smashed all of the windows.

What different emotions of young people are referenced in the extracts? From the extracts identify examples of:

- (i) Those who were **committed** to the strike's aims
- (ii) Those who felt **coerced** by the strikers
- (iii) Those who **defied** the intentions of the strikers

WORKERS

Extract 5 – Paul Arthur

Now, I was really afraid during that period. I got into school most days and what I would do was, I would drive, I would take my car as far as Bangor and then one of the teachers there would pick me up and you would go through various barricades and for the most part they were fine. You said, you know, you said, look, you were going to teach in school. Their response was, I wish I had got an education, you know, and then to do it, which is fair enough. But during that period, I had published my book on the People's Democracy. I had done a television interview about it, which raised the profile again in the school. And then I was asked to go for an interview at the Ulster Polytechnic. I remember going for that interview, which was at the height of the UWC strike, and having to negotiate my way past. I don't know, you exaggerate the number of barricades you went through, but you certainly went through several barricades and you do worry. And I went through and did the interview.

Extract 6 – Helen Crickard

Because I remember my dad having to go to work and going to work out the back and walking up through the field and trying to change his route every day and Philip as well? I think Philip had just started working in Ballylumford, building the power station and he was. Yeah, So he I think he was 16, maybe older, but I remember that there was a high level of fear for the older ones.

Extract 7 – Tony McMullan

Now, we were allowed to work because I worked in the DHSS and of course oh, because they were paying the benefits. Of course we, I mean we got a special pass from the UDA to say this man is this person is a benefits clerk or something. I mean it was really, when you think about it now, you know, you're getting you're getting a pass handed to you by ...well, paramilitaries. But they have no electoral mandate whatsoever to determine how people should go about their work. So we went to work every single day of the strike, every single day of the strike. But every single day we were stopped at least two or three times to get from Newtownards to Belfast, to Stormont..... Oh, it was a very intimidating experience because, I mean, obviously my father was conscious, well conscious that. We were Catholics and I mean, like although they had given us this because they thought it was a benefit. They didn't know what religion I was. And but we were terrified for that. If they found out that what could happen to us. But my father was determined to go to work every day..... And I, I was determined to go to work if I could.

From the extracts identify examples of:

- (i) Those who were **committed** to the strike's aims
- (ii) Those who felt **coerced** by the strikers
- (iii) Those who **defied** the intentions of the strikers

Discuss what both sets of extracts tell us about attendance at school and work as the action took hold.

Read a short secondary account of the strike which refers to the intimidation issue.

Individual work. Answer the Enquiry Question: **As the action took hold was intimidation the main reason for children not attending school and adults not attending work?**

STRIKE: PART 2

ENQUIRY QUESTION 3:

DID ORDINARY PEOPLE SUFFER HARDSHIP DURING THE UWC ACTION?

As the strike took hold, ordinary citizens, right across Northern Irish society had to deal with the inevitable fallout from the stoppage. The following testimonies focus on the emergence of a certain communal solidarity, the central role of women, as well as how the strike was experienced in rural communities and within the Nationalist population.

▶ The [Strike: Part 2](#) video covers 4 key themes:

- (i) Rations / Solidarity
- (ii) The central role of women
- (iii) Impact on rural communities
- (iv) The experience of Nationalists

Rations / Solidarity: the impact of the strike on urban communities

▶ Whole class: Watch/listen to this [Strike: Part 2](#). What impression emerges of living during the UWC action? Deprivation? Fear? Solidarity? Excitement?

▶ Small groups – distribute sets of cards to each group. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online ([Strike ii](#)).

Card 1 – Eileen Weir

So when the strike came, you know, and the electric went off and everything went off, I mean a lot of my memories of that time were happy memories, believe it or believe it or not, because our communities really came together then, because there was no electric so anybody who used to go camping on their holidays all the wee primus stoves were out making dinner for the whole street.

As a young person then, what is this contributor's main memory of living during the strike?

Card 2 – Danny Morrison

Funny enough a lot of loyalists were coming up into our area to get bread and milk because they weren't getting it into their areas. But I mean we were cooking out in the yard. There was a sort of a, a blitz mentality, I suppose, you know, people sharing and some guy going off and getting a crate of milk and helping the rest of the street out, especially if there were kids in the house.

Looking back, what does this contributor find unusual?

Card 3 – William Mitchell

I remember the vans coming around and going to people and distributing milk and stuff like that. Potatoes and bread and all, I remember that. But, you know, invariably that, that was paramilitaries, so, I know we say, well were they a threat but also there were, they were supportive as well so it was people who were connected to the paramilitary organisations that were instigating this distribution of stuff but they weren't doing it in masks you know, and the likes of that..... People rallied to support each other, and this is demonstrated in looking out for your neighbours.....

How does this contributor regard the role played by paramilitaries? Where might those supplies have come from?

Card 4 – Bernadette McAliskey

You know, ... there were two different bits of community solidarity going on there. You know, one was, you know, we make we'll, we, we muck in here as our contribution to the strike. And the other was we'll muck in here as a contribution to not being cowed. And it was very brave for, for members of the Protestant community who, who were small, small business people, small farmers, to do that in the face of that intimidation and those things get, get overlooked, you know.

Explain the difference between these two sources of solidarity?

Card 5 – Kathy Wolf

I suppose to be quite honest, you know, growing up like it was slightly fun, going, we have to go round the back of the garage, it was a wee bit like a Secret Service. We're going to be spies here, we're going to sneak around the back of the garage because he's got some petrol for us. [...] There was a certain bit of fun to it, it wasn't fun for the mothers and the grandmothers.

How does the contributor suggest her attitude may have been different from that of mums and grannies?

Complete the table below by drawing on material from each of the card sources?

Impact of the UWC Action on communities		
Negative aspects	Positive aspects	Card sources

THE EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN



Whole class: Watch/ listen to [Strike: Part 2](#). What impression emerges of the role played by women in Loyalist areas?



In pairs read through each of the extracts. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online ([Strike ii](#)).

Extract 1 – Mike Nesbitt

I think one of the constants over the whole course of the Troubles was the fact that the wives and the mothers would keep the family bound together and whatever they thought about what their husbands were doing, even if they totally disapproved of the actions they were taking their priority was to look after their loved ones, their children. And then there would be a common bond with the mother next door and next street and next estate. And you could see, perversely, that would bring a communal binding together.

Extract 2 – Dawn Purvis

They wouldn't see anybody stuck, you know, if there was, and there were families, as I say, who were poorer than others. So really didn't have any food. So they were sharing the food or they were baking. They were making pots of soup pots of stew, you know, they were sharing it out. They were making sure that everybody had and nobody was left out.

Extract 3 – Eileen Weir

But you know I would say women were the ones that kept communities going while the men were fighting to a certain degree. And that wasn't the same across all communities. There was a difference within probably Republican families where women were more active within the combat area than it was within Protestant communities and women and were making the teas, making the dinners, making sure, you know, especially during the strike, it wasn't the men that was cooking. It wasn't the men that was peeling the potatoes. It wasn't the men that was getting their kids out to school. It was the women that was doing all these things.

Extract 4 – Mervyn Gibson

So women had a strong role in making sure that the strike was observed. But they also a strong role then in providing for people. You know there was innovation, if you made a meal, you made it for three or four houses. Or they made sure the elderly in the street were fed. But that would have fallen down to the women you know, the men might have posed at the corner standing looking like vigilantes and stuff like that but in many cases it was the women who were doing the work behind the scenes.

Extract 5 – Chris McGimpsey

The boys, I mean, they need this backing of their, of their womenfolk to, to do these things.

What roles are attributed to women in each of the extracts?

Extract 1	
Extract 2	
Extract 3	
Extract 4	
Extract 5	

One contributor maintains that women were 'crucial to the strike'. Does the evidence here support that view?

THE RURAL EXPERIENCE



Watch/ listen to [Strike: Part 2](#), focussing in particular on the rural section of the video. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online ([Strike ii](#)).

What attitudes to the UWC Action are expressed?

Extract 6 – Jim Dillon

It probably was hard for some people. Probably maybe people living in the town and having to depend on everything they bought from the shop. But out in the farming community, I mean, you could always get enough to do you because you had your own eggs, your own milk and your own butter.

Extract 7 – Chris McGimpsey

But I, one of the things I can remember very well, because I remember a disagreement with my cousin Bill about this, they showed, they couldn't get the milk lorries out because the roads were blocked and they went to some farm and they got some boy, there and he was emptying big churns of milk down the drain. And the boy says, somebody said to him well, how do you feel about that, you've built up your herd, you have a good farm, you've worked all your things for milk. What are you doing about it now and he said, we've all got to make a sacrifice. And he just emptied another churn of milk down the drain. That's, that is the way people are feeling. I mean you've got farmers pouring their own milk down the drain because they support the strike and that's how they show their support. They're not trying to get the milk out, and I said well it just shows you how strongly the feelings were.

Extract 8 – Jim Dillon

Well you see the farming community owned the country because they owned the land. And the perception was about, well, if you lose this battle, you'll lose your farms. Maybe. They will be taken from you, they will maybe nationalise them, and you just don't know it when you see what has happened in the Republic of Ireland, in the Free State.

Using Extracts 6, 7 and 8, in what ways was life easier / harder for farming families during the strike?

How do the extracts help us to understand why the farming community were so important to the impact the strike had?

THE EXPERIENCE OF NATIONALISTS

Watch/read these testimonies. Are the tone and attitude of speakers different from those from the Loyalist / Unionist community?

It's pretty clear that, you know, within a week of it beginning that in, within the Protestant community, there was massive support for it because they think this - we're winning.

They must have been frightened, they must have been intensely concerned, if you want to put it that way. I mean, I mean, the Prods were out, they were on the street, they were mobilised and why would they not be frightened?

Loyalist protests, particularly during the UWC strike, weren't met with British army repression or violence. No barricades were taken down, no rubber bullets were fired.

I remember one of my main concerns was where we were to get a drink.

NATIONALIST EXPERIENCES

You know, it made you realise, how insecure everything was that at a flick of a switch people could turn your whole life upside down. You know, they could withdraw your

And the idea that the British army were going to lift loyalists [...] No, the army was not used against the loyalists. And that was always the big issue that how come?

If we had jobs and were unionized and could strike, would we get striking for 14 days. ..Without intervention, would we be allowed to block the roads with tractors? And saw up trees and fell them across the road? Would we be allowed armed and masked to stand on the public highway for 14 days?

The Nationalist community banded together. If you take West Belfast, they actually did manage to get, if you like, avenues out into the Republic where they were getting some essential supplies in. [...] But there was definitely a sense of fear because underneath [...] they didn't know how it was going to end.

Select six adjectives which best express the feelings of this group of Nationalists towards the UWC Action:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Now, return to the Enquiry Question:

Did ordinary people suffer hardship during the UWC Action?

In your groups prepare a 5 slide PowerPoint presentation.

Drawing on your findings sum up to what extent each group experienced hardship

Slide 1 Urban communities

Slide 2 Women

Slide 3 Rural communities

Slide 4 Nationalists

Slide 5 Bring your findings together to reach a conclusion:

Did the UWC action actually cause suffering to people in Northern Ireland?

VOICES OF '74 – STRIKE (B)

STRIKE: PART 3 AND PART 4

TEACHER OVERVIEW

The UWC strike occurred over fourteen days in May 1974. The testimonies reveal insights into who was leading the strike, the different community reactions to the strike and reference the devastating Dublin and Monaghan bombs of the same month. Testimonies look back on the UWC strike as a time of community solidarity and celebration, while others detail intimidation and the despair that marked the failure of the Power Sharing Executive.

These activities use the testimonies to evaluate who was leading the strike, give students the opportunity to investigate key moments in the strike, such as Wilson's infamous 'spongers' speech, while also allowing students to reflect on the positive and negative reactions to the strike.

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- Who led the UWC strike?
- Why did the devastating Dublin and Monaghan bombs not have a decisive impact on what was happening in the North?
- Why did the Back to Work campaign fail?
- What impact did Wilson's 'spongers' speech have on the development of the UWC strike?
- How did people feel during the UWC strike?


PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- Students will have completed the earlier sections on leading up to May 1974, and will have looked at the Strike One and Strike Two material.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students should be able to determine who led the UWC strike.
2. Students should independently assess the different opinions on the UWC strike and understand that it was viewed both positively and negatively by different sections of the community.
3. Students should be able to utilise the videos and the transcripts to answer historical questions.

CONTENT

 Video Clips: [Strike: Part 3](#) and [Strike: Part 4](#).

Students are encouraged to watch each of the videos in their entirety, and this is noted in the resource.

STRIKE: PART 3

CONTEXT

Testimonies of the UWC strike reveal difficult recollections around issues of violence and intimidation, including one of the most significant atrocities of the Troubles, the Dublin/Monaghan bombs of 17 May 1974.



Students watch and listen carefully to Strike: Part 3 and identify who was responsible for the strikes.

Student Objectives:

1. Watch Strike Three and listen to each testimony carefully.
2. Students list down who they think is most responsible for the strikes from watching the clip Strike Three.
3. Extension task: Students explain why they chose to place the groups in the place that they did. Students write a paragraph to explain who was most responsible for the UWC strike.

Students may wish to use a Cornell Note Taking Diagram as they watch the clips and read the sources.

CORNELL NOTES

Name _____ Date _____

Topic _____ Subject _____

Main Ideas	Notes

Summary

1

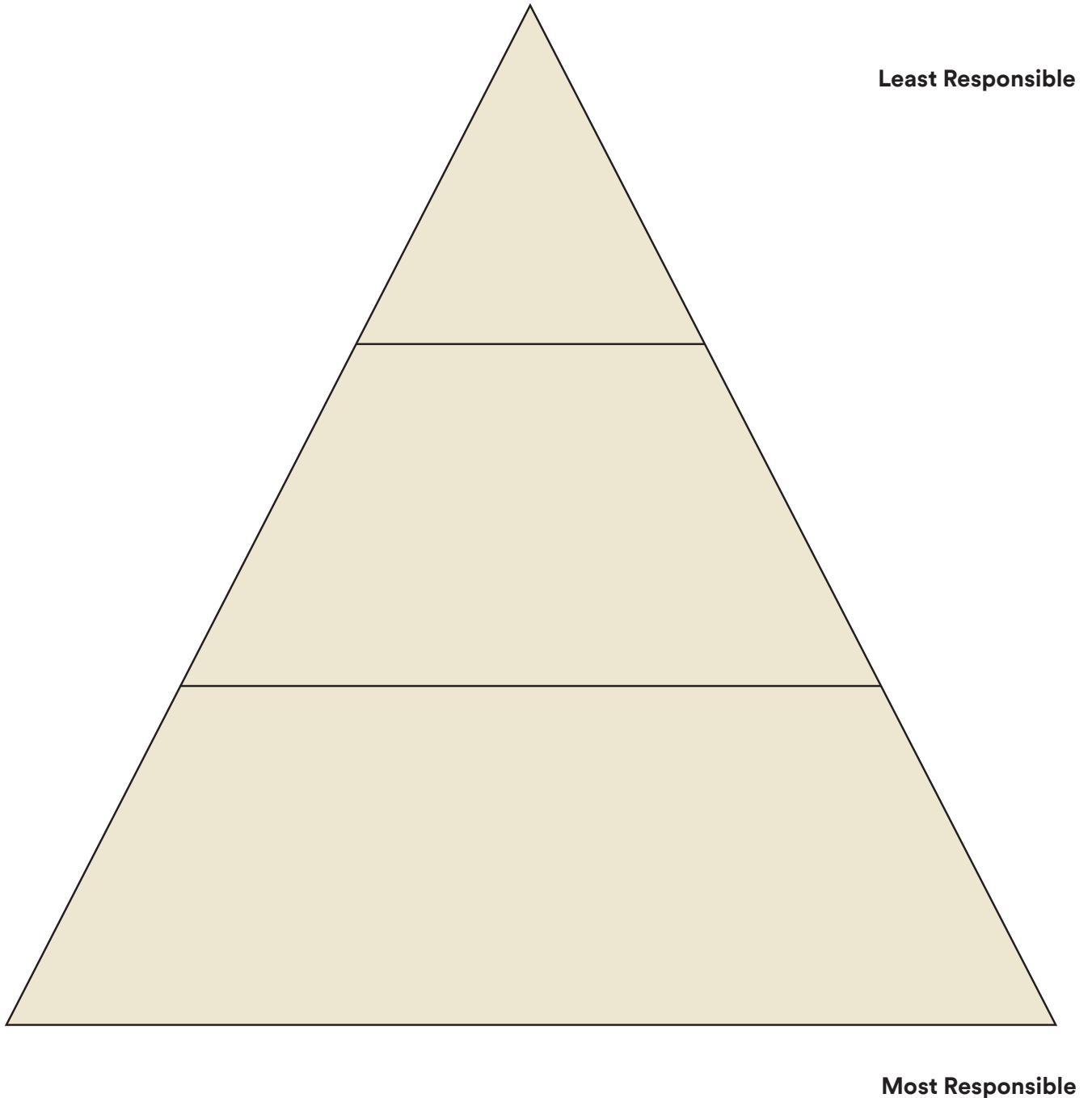
Students then fill in the main ideas section in bullet points, before synthesising their ideas in two sentences in the summary section.

ACTIVITY 1 - PYRAMID



- Listen to each testimony in [Strike: Part 3](#) carefully.
- List down who you think is responsible from what you hear.
- Place them in the Pyramid of Responsibility – Most Responsible to Least Responsible

Who was most responsible for the Strikes?



PYRAMID OF RESPONSIBILITY

ACTIVITY 2 - WRITING

- After investigating who was responsible for the UWC strike, students answer the following: Who was most responsible for the UWC strike? Students should use their Pyramid of Responsibility to help them answer the question. Why did they place them in this order?

Explain who was responsible for the UWC strike.

ACTIVITY 3 - DISCUSS

STUDENT OBJECTIVE

- Students have a discussion on how the UWC coordinated the Strike Action in 1974.
- Students create a list of the communication methods they think might have been used.

How was the strike action coordinated?



2

ACTIVITY 4 – PAIRED WORK

▶ In pairs, students should consider Strike: Part 3 and write a brief answer to the following question.

Explain why Unionist politicians, workers, and paramilitaries attempted to work together on the UWC strike.



Politicians



Workers



Paramilitaries

Was it a successful collaboration?

³[File:Ian Paisley 1970.png - Wikimedia Commons](#)
⁴[File:The Right to Strike.jpg - Wikimedia Commons](#)
⁵[File:Flag of the Ulster Defence Association.svg - Wikimedia Commons](#)

ACTIVITY 5: SOURCE WORK



Students should answer the following source question on [Strike: Part 3](#).

- How useful is this video for a historian studying who was responsible for taking control of the UWC strike in May 1974?
- Students should use a quote from each of the testimonies and then decide which testimony that they think is the most useful. (**Transcripts provided below**)

- Which source do you think provides the most useful evidence?

TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONIES FROM STRIKE: PART 3



Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online ([Strike iii](#)).

Mike Nesbitt

So in terms of who was organising and controlling the strike, you've got three groups, you've got the workers, you've got the politicians, and you have got the paramilitaries. So if you're looking at it as a pyramid, which I think mightn't be a bad analogy, let me say this, it wasn't the workers and it wasn't the politicians who were at the peak.

Don Anderson

And several days in, I mean, actually quite a few days in. At the beginning of the strike, Paisley, was in North America conveniently, and he came back and strode into the Hawthornden, Hawthornden Road or Drive, headquarters and he saw the top chair and went towards it. Glen Barr said, out, I'm in charge. You're Johnny come lately. And the, that was the politicians being pushed aside because they, many around that table thought it was the failure of politicians that had brought about this situation and they really didn't want them round the table and they were not given any position of great authority.

Henry Patterson

But the core of it was clearly the industrial shop steward element and the paramilitary element. But the core of it, I mean, the core of it that gave it legitimacy was, was shop stewards, people with, if you like, credibility in workplaces and I think you're much more aware of that sort of element than the LAW thing the only name that came to mind and only person who seemed to do any talking. Maybe I'm wrong about my recollection of it was Billy Hull.

Kenny McFarlane

Well, I would say I would say, look, when you look back at it, it was it started off with the workers and started with the UDA and stuff like who wouldn't have been what the organization it is now, but it was a working class revolution I suppose as someone said, But what happened is what always happens in all things in Northern Ireland, is the politicians came in and says, Right, you have done enough, we'll take over. And it was about them maintaining power and you know the story of it.

ACTIVITY 6 - THE DUBLIN/MONAGHAN BOMBS



Students rewatch the end of *Strike: Part 3*, focussing on the section dealing with the Dublin/Monaghan Bombing. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online (*Strike iii*).



Nelson McCausland

That you were seeing on the news reports of both shootings and bombings, yes. And the Monaghan attacks and so on that were carried out at that time probably would have made a much greater impact if it hadn't been sorry, it would have made a much greater impact on us if it hadn't been for the fact that you've been living with that for years. The fact that things were now being extended into the Republic but it didn't make the impact possibly on us that it might in other circumstances, because of the fact that you were so used to it.

Mervyn Gibson

Vaguely, well, I'll be truthful. Probably the feeling was we've been getting that for four years now. Now that was wrong, there is no doubt about it, innocent people were killed. No question, Protestants were killed in the bomb. So what do you call it, but there there was a sense at the time. Yes, it was wrong. But that's what we have been experiencing. It didn't impact the strike or didn't seem to support it in any way. [...] And there is I think there is an element of by that point, there was, unbelievably, there had become a numbness to, a numbness, yes, kind of yes a normalisation of things that are.

Dawn Purvis

I just remember some of the comments in the street and they were horrific, you know, from women. And I know that there was wee tots killed in the, in the bomb. And I remember some of the women in the street were talking about, I didn't know what had happened, but again I was hearing the gossip from the women in the street and they were talking about the bombs. And it was eventually our side goes out and gets a win. And I didn't know. Again I didn't know what they were talking about. [...] So I went in and said to mum, what's a win for our lads? And here she was. Who said that? And I told her who had said it and she went, that's a disgrace, don't you be, don't you be listening to that.

Students read the extracts above on the Dublin/Monaghan bombings and reflect on the following questions:

- Is there anything shocking or surprising about what you are reading?
- What do these extracts tell you about life in Northern Ireland during the 1970s?
- How do you feel about what these sources are relating?

- Some people relate that they feel that the Dublin/Monaghan bombings are a forgotten part of the Troubles conflict. Using the sources, why do you think this is?
- How are the Dublin/Monaghan bombings commemorated today?

STUDENT REFLECTIONS

STRIKE: PART 3 PLENARY – ‘WHAT IF’?

What if:

- You were a teacher in 1974. Would you support the strike?
- You were a factory worker in 1974. Would you support the strike?
- You were a doctor in 1974. Would you support the strike?
- You were a student in 1974. Would you support the strike?
- Have some fun with the what ifs...
- *What if the Army had of taken control and disarmed the roadblocks and the UDA?*

What if you were a teacher in 1974.
Would you support the strike?

What if you were a doctor in 1974.
Would you support the strike?

What if you were a soldier working in Belfast
in 1974. Would you support the strike?

What if you were a factory in 1974.
Would you support the strike?

What if you were a student in 1974.
Would you support the strike?

What if the Army had taken control and
disarmed the roadblocks and went head-to-
head VS the UDA.

Create your own WHAT IFS!

Explain **WHY** for each one you choose

STRIKE: PART 4

▶ For the next set of activities, students should watch *Strike: Part 4*.

CONTEXT

As the strike moved into its second week, it became clear that the Executive was on borrowed time. Two particular events would confirm that the Sunningdale experiment had run out of road. The first was a failed attempt to force a return to work on 21 May. There then followed Prime Minister Harold Wilson's ill-fated and infamous 'spongers' speech on 25 May. The Executive was eventually forced to resign on 28 May with, as our testimonies demonstrate, a mixture of reactions.

KEY QUESTION:

- How did the UWC Strike affect the Institutions?

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. Did the Trade Unions misread/misinterpret the UWC Strikes?
2. Explain why Harold Wilson's speech united Unionists during the strike?
3. Examine a range of reactions to the end of the UWC strike.
4. Students may wish to use a Cornell Note Taking Diagram when watching *Strike: Part 4*.

CORNELL NOTES

Name _____ Date _____
Topic _____ Subject _____

Main Ideas	Notes
Summary	

Students can take notes as they watch the clips and read the sources.

Students then fill in the main ideas section in bullet points, before synthesising their ideas in two sentences in the summary section.

ACTIVITY 7 – SEQUENCING

▶ Watch *Strike: Part 4* and sequence the events using sources.

1. Match the date to the event.
2. Place these events in order using the information from the sources.

25th May 1974

28th May 1974

PM infamous 'sponger' speech

Planned 'return to work' for the Northern Ireland workers

Executive resigns

21th May 1974

21st May 1974

25th May 1974

28th May 1974

ACTIVITY 8 – SOURCE ANALYSIS



Consider *Strike: Part 4* and the extracts below and respond to the questions that follow. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online (*Strike iv*).

THE BACK TO WORK CAMPAIGN

Boyd Black

Len Murray was it [...] and a few, maybe a few others? I can't remember if there are others, and led this big back to work march thinking that there was all this popular support, that the strikers were only were intimidating people and people, people given the chance to get back to work, would come out in their droves. But they didn't. And they'd something like 150 or 200 people and it, and showed themselves to be completely out of touch with what was happening at grassroots.

Chris McGimpsey

I mean, like I mean, like trade union leaders came over from London to say, we're going to lead the workers to work because the workers are socialists and they want to work and they don't want any of this nonsense. And they turned up, you know, and about 200 people showed. And they said, well, that's, that's entirely down to intimidation, they'd expected five thousand and they got 200. Nobody intimidated 4800 people you know, people just didn't support it, support the concept of breaking the strike and so on.

Henry Patterson

And the organisation of that back to work march was a, it was just, it was going nowhere, you know, because you had Billy Blease, great guy, nice guy, friend of my dad's in the Northern Ireland Committee but then you had Andy Barr in the CP and Jimmy Graham, people who organised it. They had credibility as trade Unionists. But they didn't have credibility on an issue that is political. And so the CP did its best to de-legitimise, get the strike off - was to bring Len Murray over and how many people did they get on it, a couple of hundred. It was a joke and just strengthened the campaign.

- What reaction did the Trade Union leaders receive when they attempted to resolve the strike?
-

- Using one word – describe the reaction
-

- Using quotations from the sources, why do you think the Back to Work campaign received this reaction?
-
-
-
-
-



Consider *Strike: Part 4* and the extracts below and respond to the questions that follow. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online ([Strike iv](#)).

THE “SPONGERS” SPEECH

Don Anderson

When Faulkner, at the last minute got the text of what Wilson was going to say I think he buried his face in his hands. When he called the strikers and those who supported them, spongers on the British exchequer. Well people actually they pulled off bits of sponge and were wearing badges on their lapels. This was an insult from the Westminster government. Who do these people think they are, said Wilson - unelected and there were those who said, look, in the end the British government would end up with no friends in Northern Ireland. The Nationalists already were no friends of the Westminster government, and Wilson was actually well on the way to making no friends among the loyalists and Protestants.

Danny Morrison

I think, I think I laughed. There was always a wee tiny percentage of hope that he would act on it. You know, this wasn't a labour dispute. This wasn't a strike aimed at bringing democracy. It was a strike aimed at bringing democracy down, you know, qualified terms within the six county state. And, you know, he gave the impression that he was going to, you know, act against them and act decisively and he was a wimp. In end of the day, he was a wimp.

Mervyn Gibson

It was my most vivid memory of the strike, I have to say. The spongers, calling the Unionist people spongers. We were the people of the Somme, we were the people that were loyal to the Crown more than anybody else. And he dared to call us spongers. And I think that if anything cemented the strike and brought it to a conclusion was that because that the people the more resolute to see this through, if they needed more resolution to see it through or more backbone or whatever to see it through.

Paul Arthur

It's hard to find a worse form of words. And I remember at the time listening to the speech because I was expecting great things. And once I heard that expression, I thought, this is absolute disaster, you know, just as internment and Bloody Sunday was a recruiting sergeant for the IRA, this was doing exactly the same on the other side.

What did Harold Wilson mean by 'spongers'?

Use the extracts to explain the Strikers' reaction to Wilson's speech? Use a quotation from each source.

TASK 9 - THE END OF THE STRIKE

THE POWER SHARING EXECUTIVE FALLS

Students watch the following video clip:

 [RTÉ Archives | Politics | End of power-sharing in Northern Ireland](#)

Students read the sources below and draw a simple emotion beside what each author thought about the end of the strike.



SOURCE ONE

Jim Gibney

Yeah, Well, I think what was well, what when the strike was over, I think people kind of breathed a sigh of relief that that it hadn't led to anything inside the prison, you know, that the fear that was there at the time something could have come out of this, that that that was kind of like a relief, you know, that it was over. So, you know, life goes on inside the prison type of thing, you know what I mean. And politically would it have been perceived as a relief as well, because Sunningdale was killed off.

SOURCE TWO

Dawn Purvis

Oh, it was like a 12th of July. So it was I mean, the streamers were out, the flags were out. People found food from wherever they had hidden it, you know, there was street parties galore. The barricades were coming down. You know, everybody just, there was a whole sense of relief. It was like the war is over. That's what it felt like.

SOURCE THREE

Anne Devlin

but at the same time, I just remember the terrible, terrible despair when, when it ended, it was so extraordinary. It was so sad because the republicans were just sitting in the wings, basically in Andersonstown waiting and this, this, this chance had gone. And the, and the thing is, it was gone for a very long time.

SOURCE FOUR

Helen Crickard

It felt like they were dancing on your grave. You know, it really felt like, after what we'd been through and the level of fear and the intimidation, all of a sudden everybody's very joyful that we're not moving forward, that we're going to stay in the same, same status quo.

SOURCE FIVE

Mike Nesbitt

The famous day when all the tractors basically blockaded the Prince of Wales Avenue, that iconic mile from the from the gates of the Newtownards road up to up to parliament buildings was to me frightening because you wonder what what are these people capable of? And then what's, what's the consequence? Ok so we have brought down our government? What is next? Why? Why do these people want direct rule when their Prime Minister has just called you a sponger? So why, why do you want to give them more authority over how we are governed? So there was a lot of uncertainty in my mind about what was going to happen next. But also, what was the logic of doing all this

Using one key quote from each source, explain why the different people felt this way about the end of the strike.

SOURCE ONE

SOURCE TWO

SOURCE THREE

SOURCE FOUR

SOURCE FIVE

STUDENT REFLECTION



Considering the different reactions to the strike, negative and positive, use [Strike: Part 4](#) to explain what impact the UWC Strike had on Northern Ireland.

VOICES OF '74 – CONSEQUENCES

TEACHER OVERVIEW

The UWC strike brought down the Executive and the Sunningdale experiment failed in its attempt to find a solution to the increasingly devastating Northern Ireland problem. There is much debate as to whether the collapse of Sunningdale was a victory for Unionism, a 'pyrrhic victory,' or whether there was nothing good that came from Sunningdale's demise. It was a missed opportunity.

These activities use the testimonies to evaluate success and failure, offer explanations for the downfall of the Executive and utilise multiple perspectives to inform group work that aims to answer the inquiry questions, was Sunningdale a missed opportunity, or was the Good Friday Agreement, 'Sunningdale for slow learners?' There is a source activity and advice on answering reliability and usefulness questions.

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS

- Was the UWC Strike and the fall of Sunningdale a victory for Unionism?
- Why did Sunningdale fail?
- Was Sunningdale a lost or a missed or lost opportunity?
- Could Sunningdale have worked? What is meant by the idea that 'The Good Friday Agreement was Sunningdale for Slow Learners'?


PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- Students will have completed the sections on Sunningdale and the impact of the UWC strike and should be able to answer some open inquiry questions from this basis.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students should be able to discuss the UWC strike and the failure of Sunningdale in terms of Success and Failure.
2. Students should independently assess the different opinions on the UWC strike and the failure of Sunningdale through the investigation of multiple perspectives.
3. Students should compare different perspectives and be given the opportunity to discuss reliability and usefulness when dealing with multiple perspectives.

CONTENT

 Video Clips: [Consequences: Part 1](#) and [Consequences: Part 2](#)

Students are encouraged to watch each of the videos in their entirety, and this is noted in the resource.

WAS THE UWC STRIKE AND THE FALL OF SUNNINGDALE A SUCCESS OR A VICTORY FOR UNIONISM?

The UWC strike brought down the Executive and the Sunningdale experiment failed in its attempt to find a solution to the increasingly devastating Northern Ireland problem. As the testimonies below demonstrate, much debate remains as to the consequences of this collapse, how it was perceived within the Nationalist community, and whether it should be considered as a victory for Unionism.

BY THE END OF THESE ACTIVITIES:

1. Students should be able to discuss the UWC strike and the failure of Sunningdale in terms of Success and Failure.
2. Students should independently assess the different opinions on the UWC strike and the failure of Sunningdale through the investigation of multiple perspectives.
3. Students should compare different perspectives and be given the opportunity to discuss reliability and usefulness when dealing with multiple perspectives.


The UWC strike brought down the Executive and the Sunningdale experiment failed.

SUNNINGDALE MEANT:

- A Power-Sharing Executive in Northern Ireland – the Power-Sharing Executive included members from the UUP, the SDLP and the Alliance Party.
- A Council of Ireland – Seven Members from the Power-Sharing Executive and Seven Members from the Irish Government.

The UWC strike brought down the Executive and the Sunningdale experiment failed.

OPENING (2 MINUTES)

- Why did some of those who opposed Sunningdale dislike the power-sharing?
 - Why did some of those who opposed Sunningdale dislike the Council of Ireland?
 - Was the opposition that was created against Sunningdale mostly against power-sharing or the Council of Ireland?
- 

ACTIVITIES 1 – VICTORY FOR UNIONISM?

Students watch/ read the following extracts from *Consequences: Part 1* on Brian Faulkner.

Erskine Holmes

No, no, no. It was a, um, it was a disaster and, and the, the I mean, not enough is made of the breadth of the mind of Brian Faulkner, I came to know Brian Faulkner quite well and I was surprised at how radical he had become, you know. So I think they, they, they, they lost they lost a leader there when they lost Brian Faulkner...

Discussion Point:

Why does the source describe Brian Faulkner as radical? What does the source mean by 'they lost a leader when they lost Brian Faulkner'? Is this a Nationalist viewpoint or a Unionist viewpoint? Is this a reliable assessment of Brian Faulkner?

Inquiry Question: **Was the UWC Strike and the fall of Sunningdale a success or a victory for Unionism?**

Students watch *Consequences: Part 1* then take the extracts below and highlight in two colours where it claims that it was a 'victory' for Unionism and where it claims that it was a 'failure' for Unionism. What other words are used to describe it? Students work in pairs in this task.

Carmel Hanna

I probably think it was a failure, but I at that time it just seemed to me that where are we going in Northern Ireland, you know that. And I still felt the only hope was somebody who had a plan. And I did think the SDLP probably were the only people who were trying to envisage a Northern Ireland, you know, to try to include everybody, to keep it as open and balanced and looking at the relationships. And I think that was something that was a threat to Unionists too.

Don Anderson

My view is that it was the high watermark of Unionism and everything from that point on has been a retreat. All of the things, every single one of them that those strikers fought for has been lost and probably irretrievably lost.

Bernadette McAliskey

I think there were maybe people within the Loyalist Association of Workers who got their fingers burnt and had not intended to get into bed with armed people intimidating other workers and so they lost that. They lost that to an extent as well. Yeah. But it strengthened it strengthened the loyalist paramilitaries.

Chris McGimpsey

Well, I think in a way it was a victory because, I mean, I think the Protestant Community needed a victory. And I think they had I mean, they had set up a goal they indicated how they wished to achieve that goal. They realised, they indicated what they felt would come after, out of that goal. And I mean, they achieved the goal. So, I mean, it was a victory, a victory at the time, and I think there would have been, there was a euphoria that carried on for two, or for a few years. But what has happened since we can look back now and say, well, you know, maybe we should have should have gone with Sunningdale, but nobody saw the value of Sunningdale. Everybody saw a vehicle trundling inexorably towards a United Ireland. And the spongers made up their mind they weren't going to go with it.

Douglas McIlldoon

No, I think, I thought I think it made union, Unionism, had the opportunity when it was in power to be magnanimous, to co-opt people into its project. The more they, they resisted doing that the less power they had, the less of a project they had to co-opt people into. They don't have any kind of project to co-opt anybody into now. No I think the Unionism, it wasn't a victory for Unionism. It was part of a long-term defeat for Unionism.

Boyd Black

Well, at the time it seemed to be a yeah, it probably did seem to be a in that It had seen off a Council of Ireland and I suppose that was seen as a, of, was perceived as a victory. I mean it would have been a what was it a Council of Ireland or what could it have ever have been. So was it a, was it a big victory? It probably was perceived as a victory for Unionism and Nationalism probably perceived it as a defeat, although the Provos would have probably thought it was a victory.

Tony McMullan

I think the hard liners probably still perceive it as a victory because they were able to get rid of the Council of Ireland and they were able to to stop power-sharing happening for another 30 years.

Students come up with two short lists and feed back to the rest of the class.

Evidence for Failure for Unionists	Evidence for Success for Unionists

The teacher should then lead a class discussion on these findings: Was the fall of Sunningdale a failure or a success for Unionism? Students should be given one minute to give a short 'gut instinct' reply to the inquiry. The teacher goes around the room and quickly gets as many student perspectives as possible.

ACTIVITIES 2 – THE PROBLEM OF VICTORY VERSUS FAILURE



Students should read the following short perspective from *Consequences: Part 1*.

Paul Bew

So no, it's not a victory at all. No, not absolutely not at all. But almost everything on one side or [...] the other thought was a victory throughout the entire troubles wasn't.

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Why does the source note 'But almost everything on one side or the other thought was a victory throughout the entire Troubles?'
- Why is it difficult for a historian to separate investigations of the past into simple thematic approaches such as 'Victory versus Failure?'
- Suggest other ways that a historian could use to look at a topic like this.

ACTIVITIES 3 – 'NOTHING GOOD CAME OF IT.'



Students should read the following perspective from *Consequences: Part 1*. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online (*Consequences i*).

Mike Nesbitt

But clearly it meant that we weren't going to have a devolved government for a very, very long time. It meant that the nascent sense of trust-building that attended, that that Executive for its short life was destroyed and not backwards. So nothing good, nothing good came of it. Further distrust, Nationalists looking at Unionism and saying, You're just not prepared to give us anything, Unionism perhaps thinking, well, all we have to do is show our muscles again and everything will be all right, but it won't be all right because this is contested territory. [...] And what happened in 74 with the collapse of the Executive and of Sunningdale was basically, to my mind, a reminder to the Nationalist people that [...] we're not budging on this.

Using the Perspective above, give two to three reasons why the fall of Sunningdale was described as extremely negative for Northern Ireland. Could this be described as a Nationalist or Unionist viewpoint? Is this a useful interpretation for a historian investigating the consequences of the fall of Sunningdale?

1.

2.

3.

Nationalist or Unionist viewpoint? Explain your choice. _____

ACTIVITIES 4 - WHY DID SUNNINGDALE FAIL?



Students should watch [Consequences: Part 2](#) and take down words that stand out and give their initial reflections on what they hear – identifying perspectives and conflicts in the recording.

'SUNNINGDALE COULD HAVE WORKED – WITHOUT THE IRELAND BIT.'

Mervyn Gibson

Sunningdale failed because the Unionist community didn't want a Council of Ireland, it was very simple, the vast majority didn't want to be a part of Ireland because they were they still had a legal territory claim over Northern Ireland, Articles two and three. I think it was, they they sort of still had this aspiration in their constitution that they controlled the whole island of Ireland. The IRA were at a very mounted a very severe and nasty campaign against the Unionist committee, against all the community, but particularly the security forces which were mainly Unionist, etc.. You know, we were pretty close to 72 when so many people were killed in the troubles, so the timing wasn't right? Yes. For those politicians, they thought it was, you know, grand, but they needed to bring their community with them. [...] And certainly they weren't bringing the Unionist committee with them.

Jim Dillon

I have never really figured it out, to be honest with you. The Ulster Workers Strike had vast majority support behind it. Sunningdale failed, because I don't think there was enough PR done for Sunningdale. I don't think it was sold well to the people, if it had been explained to them properly and sold it might have succeeded. Sunningdale could have worked without the Ireland bit and that that that could have been that that could have been avoided being put in or better. That might have been the best option but it could have been taken out but then the other side might not have accepted it then.

Using the above perspectives, list the reasons mentioned on why Sunningdale failed.

Sunningdale failed because –

After doing this, students should consider if 'Sunningdale would have worked without the Ireland bit.'

Students should think in terms of –

- Unionists who supported Sunningdale
- Unionists who opposed Sunningdale
- Nationalists
- Republicans
- Loyalists
- British and Irish Governments

OPEN INQUIRY

– WAS SUNNINGDALE A LOST OR A MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

Students could be placed into groups of 4-5 for this activity.

Students are given a position:

- Sunningdale was a lost opportunity.
- Sunningdale was never going to work.
- Northern Ireland was not ready for an agreement like Sunningdale in 1974.

Student groups read the evidence together and try to identify perspectives as they read: Unionist – Nationalist – Republican. Students should highlight a comment or sentence that influenced their decision. They can use the suggested grid.

Students prepare evidence bullet points for their position and feed these back to the class after ten to 15 Minutes.

This could be recorded on Flip Chart Paper – the three positions could then be stuck up at a different part of the room.

After student feedback, there should be a short discussion on the following discussion points:


- Who was more likely to see Sunningdale as a lost opportunity? (Unionist/Nationalist/Republican) Why did they say this?
- Who was more likely to say that Sunningdale would never work? (Unionist/Nationalist/Republican) Why did they say this?
- Who was more likely to say that Northern Ireland was not ready for an agreement like Sunningdale in 1974? (Unionist/Nationalist/Republican).

The three flip chart pages could be stuck up in the room. Students could then be asked to walk to the position that they believe is the most historically correct. The teacher could then engage in a discussion as to why the students picked this position and what is their evidence for what they have chosen?

Perspective	Sources	Phrases and Comments that helped me make my decision.
<i>Unionist Perspective</i>		
<i>Nationalist Perspective</i>		

<i>Republican Perspective</i>		
<i>None of the above</i>		

ACTIVITIES 5 – WAS IT A LOST OPPORTUNITY FOR NORTHERN IRELAND?

 Students should consider [Consequences: Part 2](#) and the extracts below. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online ([Consequences ii](#)).

Jim Roddy

I think as I said before, if, if you're going to find agreement, you have to have willing partners. I don't think people were willing at that stage to do the agreement. I think people were yearning to get agreement and people were yearning to get an agreement that would end violence and take us to a better place. But were the people ready for that?

And I think that's, that's probably, you know, my views on where we, where we were at then. It Would it have been great to have had that agreement then ringfenced and we wouldn't have had the further years of violence? Absolutely.

Chris McGimpsey

I think it was, I personally feel, although I wouldn't have been supportive at the time, but I realised fairly early on that if we had gone with it, I think that it could have been it could have been the end, it's a lost opportunity. Who knows how it would have ended. But I think was a major lost opportunity.

Danny Morrison

No. Missed opportunity, the continuation of British military during Sunningdale, they continued to blow up bridges and roads, isolating border communities, funnelling all human traffic through 12 major checkpoints, around a 360 mile border, no, and remember we were excluded. Sinn Féin was a proscribed organisation. The SDLP were conceding military matters to them cross-border the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act, for example.

Eamon Hanna

A historic missed opportunity, you know, and I, I've had words with Danny Morrison about this. You know, he said, you know, Good Friday agreement, you know, was far superior. And I mean, I said, but there were 1300 people killed by you in the period '74 to '98, you know, you know, and for what, you know. And, but again, people aren't keen to talk about it. But it was just so missed.

Jim Roddy

There's lots of missed opportunities. Politically Sunningdale would be a missed opportunity, absolutely but, but again, a missed opportunity for whom. The politicians or the people? And if the people weren't ready for it then it really wasn't a missed opportunity because there was no opportunity if the people weren't ready for it. That might seem very cold. It's not meant to and it's not in any way disparaging against those politicians who, who had manoeuvred this, this agreement or this opportunity. But it's only an opportunity if you have the people with you. If you don't have the people with you, then, then it's not really an opportunity. The secret for me of Good Friday was a referendum. Because it brought the people and it changed everything.

Paul Arthur

You know, I'm not 100% certain that Sunningdale was a missed opportunity, a, in retrospect and painfully, I think we had to go through it. Sunningdale in itself was not going to work. Sunningdale... nearly 40% of the Unionist population did not support Sunningdale. If you were going to move forward. [...] I think that Sunningdale had to fail. I think, unfortunately, we had to go through what we went through before the penny dropped and we realised that we needed to have a greater vision than what we had heretofore.


Nelson McCausland

I don't think it was a missed, I don't think it was a missed opportunity because Unionism at that stage was not in a place where it could even contemplate power-sharing and later on even it's well into, you're going on a right few years before Unionism comes to the point where it accepts that there's some sort of inevitability about that and then, it's not a question of slow learners because that's just downright insulting to say that if you've been pummelled in the way that the community had been at that time, you weren't in a place where you could contemplate these things, you felt isolated and alone.

Mike Nesbitt

It depends what would have happened in terms of the output of the Council of Ireland. To my mind. I would be optimistic, confident that the Executive would have worked, that that power-sharing would have worked out. And I think that that would have saved a lot of lives, a lot of agony, a lot of wasted time. But the Council of Ireland, I don't I just don't know how that would have worked out if you could have organised it in a in a manner where anything the Council of Ireland agreed had to be endorsed by the Assembly, by Dail Eireann as we have with the North South Ministerial Council and the North South bodies,[...] it could have been a good thing. I think the power-sharing Executive was a missed opportunity, but I can't agree that the Council of Ireland with Executive powers was a missed opportunity.

ACTIVITIES 6 – DETECTING RELIABILITY AND USEFULNESS IN PERSPECTIVES

 Students should consider *Consequences: Part 2* and the extracts below. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online (*Consequences ii*).

SOURCE A

Danny Morrison

No. Missed opportunity, the continuation of British military during Sunningdale, they continued to blow up bridges and roads, isolating border communities, funneling all human traffic through 12 major checkpoints, around a 360 mile border, no, and remember we were excluded. Sinn Féin was a proscribed organisation. The SDLP were conceding military matters to them cross-border the Criminal Law Jurisdiction Act, for example.

SOURCE B

Jim Dillon

I have never really figured it out, to be honest with you. The Ulster Workers Strike had vast majority support behind it. Sunningdale failed, because I don't think there was enough PR done for Sunningdale. I don't think it was sold well to the people, if it had been explained to them properly and sold it might have succeeded. Sunningdale could have worked without the Ireland bit and that that that could have been that could have been avoided being put in or better. That might have been the best option but it could have been taken out but then the other side might not have accepted it then.

STUDENTS SHOULD LOOK AT THE ABOVE TWO PERSPECTIVES.

Take each source in turn:

- How useful is this source for a historian explaining why Sunningdale failed?
- How reliable is this source for a historian explaining why Sunningdale failed?

Use the Usefulness and Reliability grids to help you.

Remember Key Words:

Author Date Audience Purpose Tone Insinuation Limitations Gaps Distortions Context

How useful is Source A for a historian explaining why Sunningdale failed?

How reliable is Source A for a historian explaining why Sunningdale failed?

CONCLUDING ACTIVITY



Students should consider [Consequences: Part 2](#) and the extracts below. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online ([Consequences ii](#)).

Eamon Hanna

Well, I think Seamus was right. It was mainly aimed at the Unionists, at the Unionist communities. But the Provos affected to be offended by it, you know. But I, I, I think he summarised it, you know, as I said, all, I mean, all those dead people just, you know, what was it all about?

William Mitchell

I do agree with Seamus Mallon saying that the Good Friday Agreement was Sunningdale for Slow learners and you know, it's probably equally aimed at loyalists and Republicans or Unionism and Republicans and most certainly the Republican movement. I think it is because, you know, it's almost like John Hume dragged people screaming to the negotiating table. But if you look at any assessment at the time there was a stalemate, I mean, this place was going nowhere the IRA were never going to defeat the British army.

DISCUSSION POINTS:

- Could Sunningdale have worked? 'The Good Friday Agreement for Slow Learners.'
- Did the public understand Sunningdale?
- Did the public truly understand what the Council of Ireland was? What was the Council of Ireland going to do? What powers would it have?
- Modern Day Equivalent – Did voters know what Brexit would look like? Does the wider public understand the protocol?

THE TEACHER EXPLAINS WHAT SEAMUS MALLON MEANT.

Students are simply asked the following questions:

- Could Sunningdale have worked?
- What would have made it work?
- Was this possible in 1974?
- Was it a failure, a missed opportunity, or a victory for Unionism?
- Was it none of these or all of these?
- Was it the Good Friday Agreement for slow learners?

Complete the table below.

Tick what elements you think were in both agreements and what you think was only present in one agreement.

After completing this task, students should answer the question again – was Sunningdale the Good Friday Agreement for slow learners?

*Tick all that apply	Good Friday Agreement	Sunningdale
Executive		
Assembly		
Council of Ireland – Council of the Isles (GB/North/South Relations)		
Council of Ministers (North/South Relations)		
Consultative Assembly – 60 Members – Dail/Assembly (North/South)		
Principle of Consent		
Security Devolved		
Mitchell Principles of Non-Violence – End of Violence		
Decommissioning of Weapons		
Prisoner Release		

Amendment of Articles 2 and 3 in Irish Constitution												
Reform of Policing												
Normalization of Security Arrangements												
North/South Consultative Forum – Civil Society												
European Convention of Human Rights – a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland – Human Rights Commission												
Involved in Negotiations (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)	SF	LOY	UU	SDLP	DUP	ALL	SF	LOY	UU	SDLP	DUP/ VAN	ALL

***How did BREXIT affect relationships between the UK and Republic of Ireland?**

VOICES OF '74 – CONCLUSION

TEACHER OVERVIEW:

This section looks at how the UWC strike has been remembered, 50 years on. This final set of testimonies brings together concluding thoughts on how the interviewees would summarise their recollections and understanding of the 1974 UWC strike. This has created a diversity of responses for pupils to study in terms of the successes and failures of the UWC strike and the experiences of the people of Northern Ireland during the strike.

KEY INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- What was the significance of the UWC strike?
- How did the people of Northern Ireland experience the strike?

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- Students should have knowledge of key events during the period including Internment, Bloody Sunday, Bloody Friday, introduction of Direct rule, the collapse of power sharing through the UWC strike and the Anglo-Irish Agreement, and the key events of the UWC strike.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

1. recognise the significance of the UWC strike in the context of events from 1971-85 and conclude as to which event was most significant
2. Using source material/ oral history account, summarise the significance of the UWC strike in one sentence
3. Debate key perspectives of the UWC strike
4. Complete a class poll on the success of the strike
5. Complete a wheel of consequence on the positive/negative outcomes of the strike
6. Describe how Unionists and Nationalists experienced the strike
7. Complete a written question on how reliable/useful a source is in the context of the UWC strike

CONTENT



Students should have access to both the oral and written testimonies from [Conclusion: Part 1](#) and [Conclusion: Part 2](#).

Depending on the activity pupils may watch a range of material or an individual account.

Pupils may complete all or a selection of the activities below:

1. Walking debate on the UWC as one of the most important moments in the politics of Northern Ireland.
2. Using an individual account pupils will complete a one sentence summary task.
3. Students may undertake a class debate using the following extracts from accounts:
 - 'I desperately think that we should be dealing with the legacy of the past to allow our future generations move forward.'
 - 'It's a changed world. The levers that you would pull in those days are not there anymore.'
 - 'I think it's very important because it's about going forward. You have to know where you come from. And ... I think when people don't understand all of that, they tend to ... lose human rights in a way.'
4. Using an individual account - each student/ pair of students should take/ listen to one source. Use the sources below to create a word cloud/ word wall of the key sentiments felt by those who experienced the UWC strike.
5. Students may undertake a class debate using the following extracts from accounts:
 - '74 made it quite clear to me that Northern Ireland probably is a political entity destined to fail.' Do you agree?
 - The Ulster Workers' Council strike was a devastating abuse of power, held government to ransom, intimidated and frightened people, and didn't offer any solution for the future. Do you agree?
6. Class poll using white boards and evidence from the sources – was the UWC a success or a failure? (range of sources to be used at teacher discretion).
7. Wheel of consequence on the outcome of the strike (range of sources to be used at teacher discretion).
8. Thought bubble worksheet on how Nationalists and Unionists experienced the strike (range of sources to be used at teacher discretion).
9. GCSE style source questions using sources by Mervyn Gibson and Jim Dillon.

KEY QUESTION 1: WHAT WAS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UWC STRIKE?



Students should watch [Conclusion: Part 1](#) and undertake the activities below.

Over fifty years on from Sunningdale and the seismic events of the UWC strike of 1974 what sort of resonance remains in the collective memory? Is there any overlap with contemporary debates? Or does the 1974 turning point simply go to show just how much the context in Northern Ireland has changed?

ACTIVITY 1: WALKING DEBATE ON THE UWC AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MOMENTS IN THE POLITICS OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Paul Arthur

I think there's several seminal moments in the politics of Northern Ireland over the past half century, internment was one, Bloody Sunday and Bloody Friday, the introduction of direct rule, the collapse of power-sharing, through the Ulster Workers Council strike [...] The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 85, I think, was hugely important. And out of that the lead into talks about talks, culminating in the ceasefires in 1994 and then the agreement to seven 1998.

Students should:

- Be encouraged to express individual viewpoints on chosen topic(s)
- Interact with others and share their experiences to reinforce/change their viewpoints
- Listen actively and speak with confidence about their viewpoints

Students research one event each:

- Internment
- Bloody Sunday
- Bloody Friday
- Introduction of Direct Rule
- The collapse of power-sharing through the UWC strike
- The Anglo-Irish Agreement

Walking debate: the collapse of power-sharing through the Ulster Workers' Council strike was the most important moment in the politics in Northern Ireland over the past half century. Do you agree?

Each student will put forward the argument for their key event and then the class will decide (Agree, Disagree and Not Sure) and move to the sign that corresponds with their view. Students are then called upon to explain/justify their position.

ACTIVITY 2: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UWC STRIKE - ONE SENTENCE SUMMARY TASK

- Students are each given a source from *Conclusion: Part 1* – from it they must take what they think is the most important message and summarize it in one line
- The teacher will collate the ideas on the board.
- Think, Pair, Share activity: Students must now choose what they think is the description that for them most sums up the significance of the UWC strike - pair up to discuss their thoughts, then share their insights with the larger group.

Derek Moore

I think it's an important reference point because it shows that the power of people, if they can work together, you know, I'm not saying that it should be used for that sort of thing. But I'm saying if everyone in Northern Ireland took the attitude that the people took and that there only on one side. But you know, if you work together to do something, then you can do it, you can influence government, you can influence policy, and you do have power.

Bronagh Hinds

I do think it is a reference point, and I hope the reference is that they learned the lesson that this doesn't work rather than does work. You get a short-term gain, but you don't get any long-term achievement.

Bernadette McAliskey

There was a lesson there for them. I think that a that fortnight is glossed over in Unionist history and it would be interesting to understand why, why it is not counted as important, why nobody wants to talk about it. And I think the answer to that is based in what you know, when it was pulled apart, where its component parts went.

Chris McGimpsey

Am, I think it's almost forgotten about, believe it or not, having said all the things and indicated, the major support it had, never even mentioned. I don't think anybody thinks about it. It's kind of a, it's ancient history. You know there's been there's been too, so many defeat after defeat after defeat piled on the Unionists' heads that nobody can get round to remembering a victory 40 years ago, was it, what was it 50 years ago. And so, so the short answer to that is no, I don't think it plays a thing now at all, and I don't think it has, for a long time it was used as a as a stick to beat Unionism by Nationalism. I don't think they even do that anymore

Kathy Wolf

Yeah, I'm not saying it's a repeat in any sense. But no, but does resonate(you). Yeah. I think its the same I think we're still at the pat on the head, you know, and because that if I look at one side of the community and I see where they went out the likes of Sinn Féin went out into different centres and talked about what was happening and whatever. That didn't happen. I have yet to hear of any of the DUP or the UUP, that actually came out into centres and said, here's what it is. And even with the protocol, you know, we have ran sessions on the protocol to try and get people to understand we've just finished one. There were its a breakdown of the Windsor agreement that people have put into shorter form so that we can understand it better.

Nelson McCausland

It's a changed world. The levers that you would pull in those days are not there anymore. The danger sometimes I think of looking back at the past and the danger for Unionism of looking at the 1912 period and thinking, oh we need that again. So yeah, there is undoubtedly, I know we're coming up to the 50th anniversary and there'll be a lot of discussion around it, but I don't think as yet there has been any reflection within Unionism on lessons to be learned.

Jim Dillon

Well, the sad thing about it was most of the people that were really involved and remember 74 are they're dying out and the younger ones. I mean, my grandchildren, for example, will look at me as though there is horns growing out of my head.

William Mitchell

I think people like those that are, you know, belligerent Unionists would wish the UWC again, now, I think they would wish they would be able to repeat what Paisley and Craig and others were able to influence then, but are actually never going to so in that respect we're never going to have another UWC, I don't believe. But I think some people would definitely wish that one way of addressing the protocol would be to do what loyalists did in 74, in opposition of Sunningdale [...] I don't know anyone that wants to go back to them days. I don't know of anyone given the deprivation we all live in or the hardship we're experiencing, would want to visit the UWC agenda on anybody in our communities these days.

Helen Crickard

I think it's very important because it's about going forward. You have to know where you come from. And and I think when people don't understand all of that, they tend to we can you can lose human rights in a way. You know, you can think, oh sure, that's not that important. That's not that important. Those things are important every life is value is valuable and should be nurtured and treated really well. So if you start if you start ignoring what happened in the past, you could very easily find yourself there again...

Jim Roddy

I desperately want to see people respecting people's memory of the past and not dictating what their memory should be or how they should feel. But I desperately think that we should be dealing with the legacy of the past to allow our future generations to move forward. Having acknowledged the hurt that we've all that we've all imposed on others, either by thought or deed and and and and I think we couldn't have done that in 74.

Henry Patterson

I think in, I think, it's essentially remembered as a, certainly within Nationalist Northern Ireland as a coup, as a sort of coup d'état as semi-fascist where once again you using - shows its inability to compromise, and it's incapacity to reform. [...] There is a defeatist paranoid element that will read, read '74 and would use '74 as a, but I mean I think it's fundamentally wrong because first of all taking into account what happened in Omagh. Clearly the threat of violence hasn't gone away, but clearly the bulk of Republicanism is committed to, to peaceful, peaceful means. So we're in a totally different situation from that point of view.

EXTENDING WRITING ACTIVITY: WHAT WAS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UWC STRIKE? EXTENSION ACTIVITY: KEY AREAS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION / DEBATE

- 'I desperately think that we should be dealing with the legacy of the past to allow our future generations move forward'
- 'It's a changed world. The levers that you would pull in those days are not there anymore.'
- 'I think it's very important because it's about going forward. You have to know where you come from. And ... I think when people don't understand all of that, they tend to ... lose human rights in a way'

KEY QUESTION 2: HOW DID THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND EXPERIENCE THE UWC STRIKE?

Students should watch *Conclusion: Part 2* and undertake the activities below.

This final set of testimonies brings together our interviewees' concluding thoughts on how they would summarise their recollections and understanding of the 1974 UWC strike. Each was given 30 seconds, and the diversity of responses underscores the multi-perspectivity that characterises the memories of this crucial period...and perhaps the conflict more generally.

ACTIVITY 1:

Each student/ pair of students should take/ listen to one source each from *Conclusion: Part 2*. Use the sources below to create a word cloud/ word wall of the key sentiments felt by those who experienced the UWC strike. Please note that some of the extracts below are taken from the extended versions available online (*Conclusion ii*).

Don Anderson

'74 made it quite clear to me that Northern Ireland probably is a political entity destined to fail. The physical destruction, and I mentioned seeing street burning from one end to another, that actually is etched on my memory as, in microcosm, what was actually happening to the whole of Northern Ireland. And I haven't departed from that view. '74 was very important, but the lessons of it have yet to be learned more widely, and that's a job for you historians.

Paul Arthur

1974 induced in me a huge degree of despair which was reinforced by events over the next four or five years, but also raised the whole question of resilience that we've gone through this, we're coming out of it. The only way forward is through a constitutional solution. So that's where we need to set our minds. Violence does not work.

Paul Bew

I was aware of the ambiguities of the Council of Ireland idea the territorial claim not been properly dealt with by the Irish government. Even so, it was a great disappointment to me when it fell.

Boyd Black

I think it was personally a developmental experience for me in that I did feel I was understanding politics in a very acute way in a very acute situation to an extent. And, and having it validated, having my understanding validated by the way things worked, probably to a greater extent. What age was I at the time 29 or something like that. Yeah, that's maybe what it meant to me. It probably gave me confidence that, you know, I had a grasp of politics that wasn't off the wall completely.

Helen Crickard

Well, for me, it was a it was a period of fear, constant fear. And exclusion. That's how it felt and that's how it was. And I think it was a it was a it was like a dog pissing in the street you know, letting them know we're in charge and we're going to continue to be in charge and yeah.

Anne Devlin

Oh well I, it was a turning point for me because it meant that I always knew that I was leaving.

Jim Dillon

The Ulster Worker's strike was a complete success. It was well organised over a period of time, not rushed, brought about, and it was obviously coordinated. And what wasn't coordinated fell into place beautifully. I think perhaps there was a lot of good luck, good fortune, and everybody worked together because they thought their country's life blood was at stake and out of that we won at that time.

Jim Gibney

Well, I think it was I think in summing up the strike, it was for us on the inside. It was a fearful, a fearful time full of trepidation. I also think it was a significant political defeat for Unionists and loyalists from, from the British government's point of view. I think from that point onwards they decide, no, this is it, we're going to influence much more directly the, the way forward because Unionists can't be trusted. Unionists cannot be allowed untrammelled political power the way they the power that they had during the Unionist government days. That power had to be stripped from them. And I think 74 is one of those moments for the British as well as everybody else. And I think they realised no politically speaking Unionist power, untrammelled power. They helped to bring it to an end.

Mervyn Gibson

I think it showed to me that Unionism, if it works together, can achieve something. It had one aim and that was to bring down the Executive and stop the council of Ireland and it achieved that aim by everybody having the same purpose. Everybody cooperating together and I believe if we do that again then we will face any threat that comes our way.

Carmel Hanna

So we moved to a real house and we had a baby. And it was just sort of a different life starting then, you know, because it's so different to being living in the North or Northern Ireland then, you know, we came away from chaos and chaos was still there, really.

Eamon Hanna

I think and my only echo of it was talking to people who were of the Unionist persuasion.

Was, I, I suppose I hadn't realised how somebody used the word silent, silent hatred and I hadn't realised how many of them had really not bought into this idea that there had to be equality and that disappointed me and friends, you know, that they just and maybe they had maybe there had been their minds had been affected by the violence of the, of the Provos and others, but they just didn't want to know about dealing with it from a position of equality. Obviously, the people say in Alliance who are generally good guys in these things, they had bought into that and they were, they were predominantly Unionist, but the majority of the Unionist population just didn't want to know. You know, and that disappointed me. And I think the lesson has to be learned by all of us, you know, we have to make compromises.

Bronagh Hinds

The Ulster Workers' Council strike was a devastating abuse of power, held government to ransom, intimidated and frightened people, and didn't offer any solution for the future.

Erskine Holmes

Well, that's really a bit difficult because that that strike led me into organising a seminar for some of the paramilitary leaders in the UVF, in particular at Scottish Churches, House in Dunblane and seeking to cater for their interest in developing a political role as opposed to a military role. And I also was able to get the measure of some of the Ulster Worker Councils strike people who were there, the following week, one of whom was Jim Smith, who ended up working for a housing association. He was the chief Executive of Woodvale and Shankill Housing Association, was involved in the voluntary housing movement. Um, the, the work that I did for those two weeks confirmed to me that you should just talk to everybody and work with everybody, regardless of what your own views are. You know, seek to, seek to find an accommodation no matter what. And I've already explained that one person that I was talking to there may well have been involved and one of the most horrific bombings of the, the troubles. Should I have been talking with them? Of course I should have been talking with him. Had I known what he was involved in, what would I would have said? I don't know.

Geraldine Kane

It confirmed at that point where the power was, even though we looked like we were, as member of the Catholic community, although I'm not a very good Catholic, but I was a member of the Catholic community, it completely confirmed that there really was no give whatsoever.

Bernadette McAliskey

'74 workers' strike for me demonstrated the depth of the sectarianisation of the labour force inside and without challenge by the trade union, the amount of weapons held within the Protestant community legally, Vanguard showed that as well. And the difference between the capacity of the loyalist working class as a class at that time from, from the interests of the, of the Unionist political classes and, and it lost that and it lost that.

Nelson McCausland

It was the coming together of the Unionist community in a way that we hadn't seen for quite a long time. And it was a victory, but it was a victory that in some ways was wasted.

AREAS FOR CLASS DEBATE: QUOTES TAKEN FROM SOURCES:

- '74 made it quite clear to me that Northern Ireland probably is a political entity destined to fail.' Do you agree?
- The Ulster Workers' Council strike was a devastating abuse of power, held government to ransom, intimidated and frightened people, and didn't offer any solution for the future. Do you agree?

ACTIVITY 2: TAKE A CLASS POLL USING WHITE BOARDS ON THE FOLLOWING ISSUE:

- 'The Ulster workers' council strike was a success.'
- Students must qualify their position

USE THE INFORMATION FROM THE SOURCES TO COMPLETE THE TABLE BELOW:

The UWC strike was a success	The UWC strike was a failure

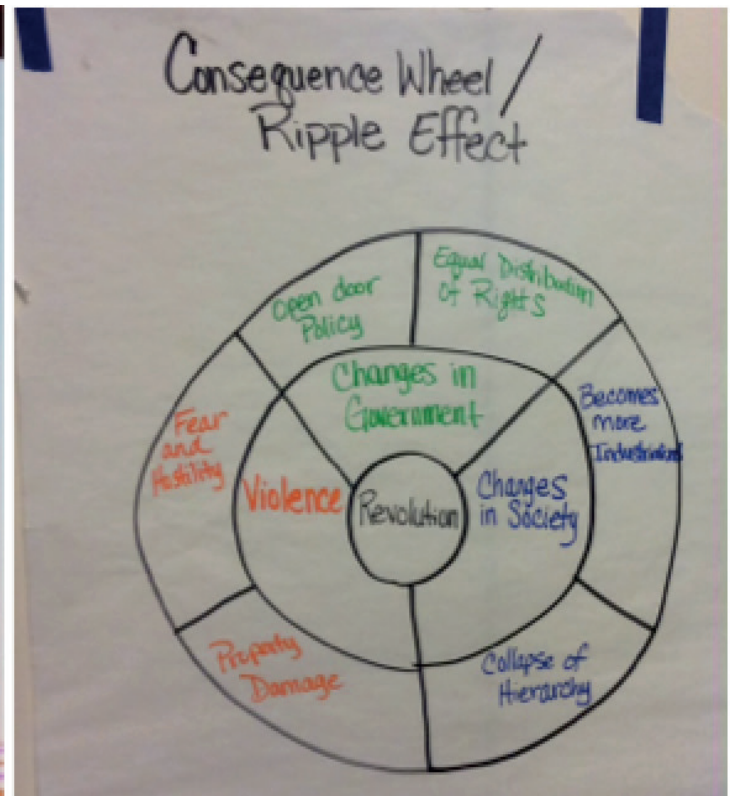
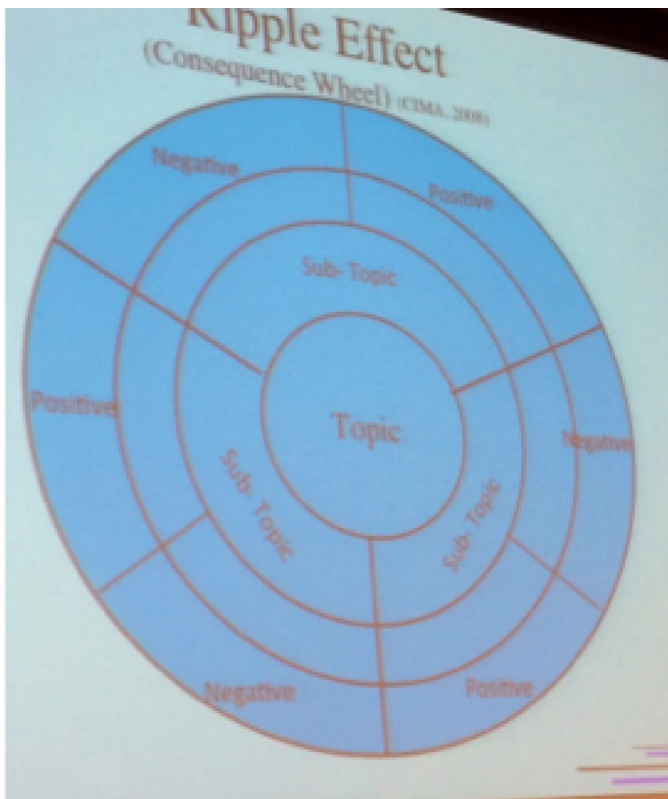
- Students should retake the poll after completing the table
- If any have changed their mind, they should explain why their position has changed/ if not then why not

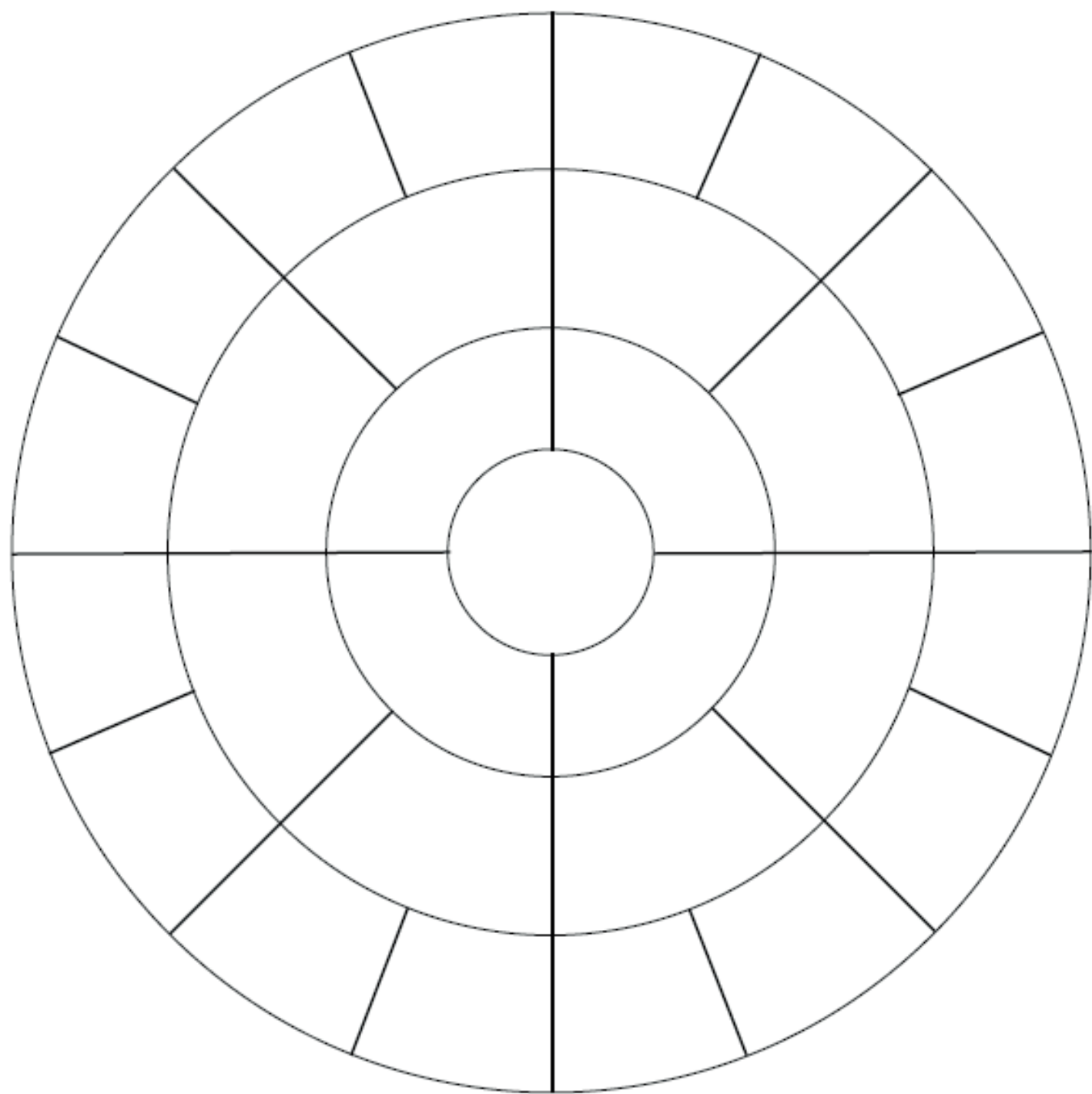
ACTIVITY 3: CONSEQUENCE WHEEL:

Use the sources to complete the consequence wheel on the experiences of the UWC strike

- Put the topic in the middle; experiences of UWC strike.
- Add the consequences in the first ring.
- Add the details, both positive and negative in the next ring.

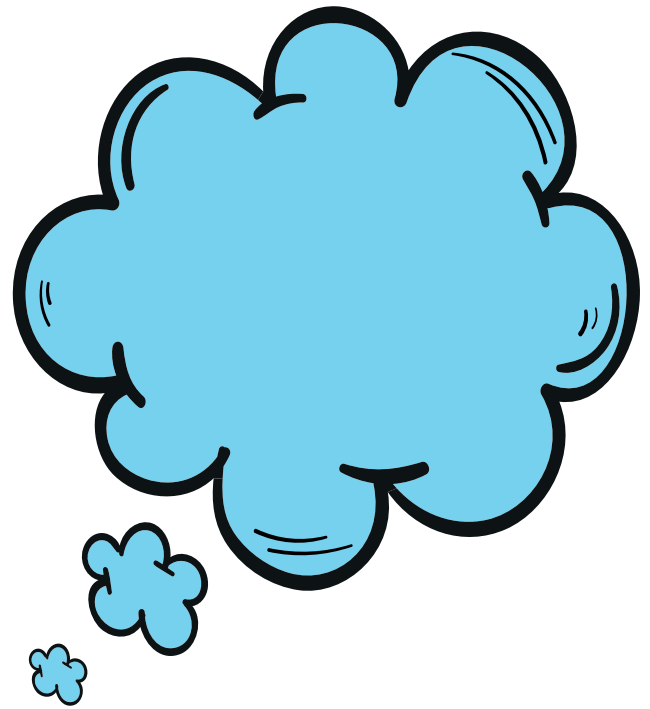
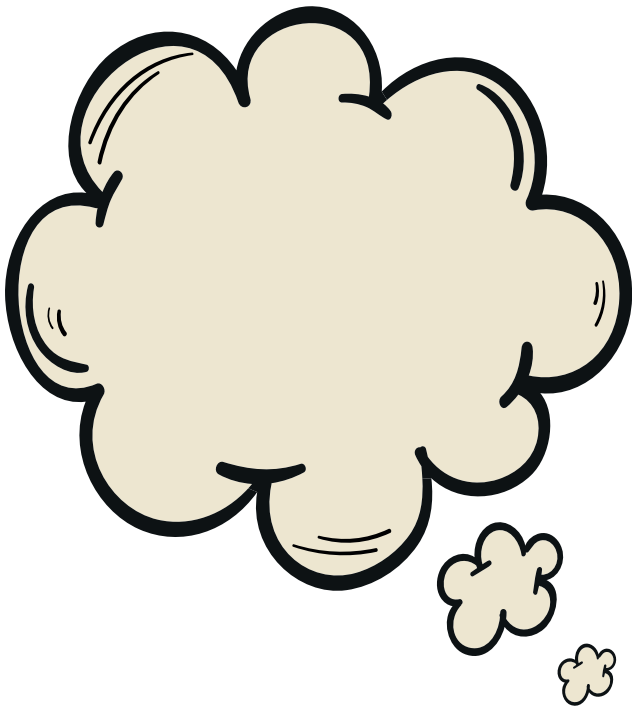
See example below:



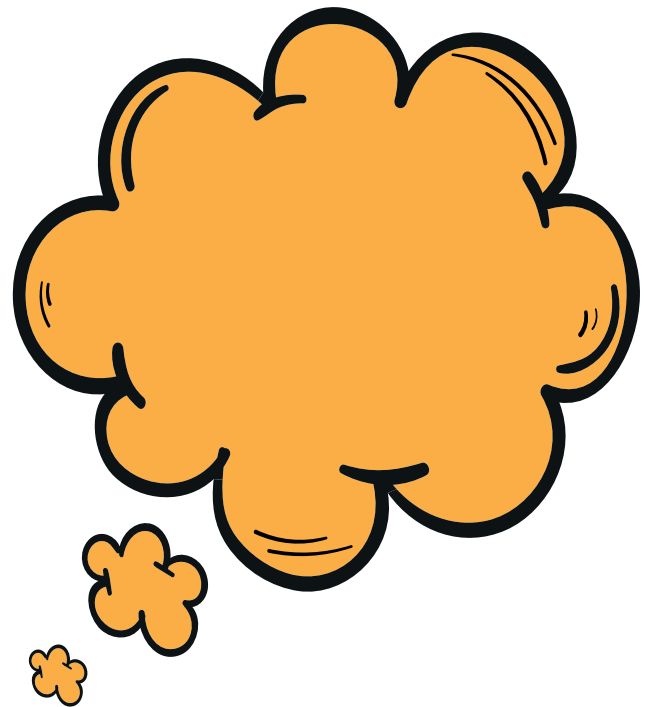
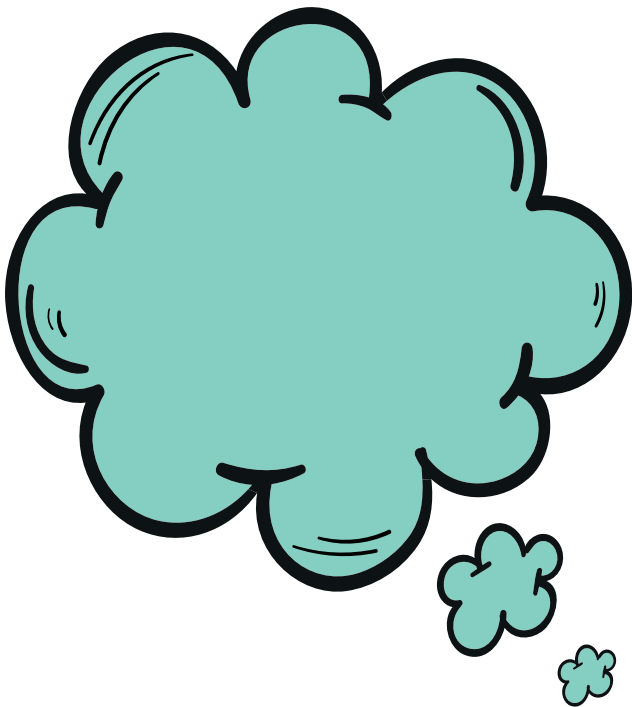


ACTIVITY 4 – COMPARING NATIONALIST/UNIONIST EXPERIENCES

Use the evidence in the sources to complete the activity below



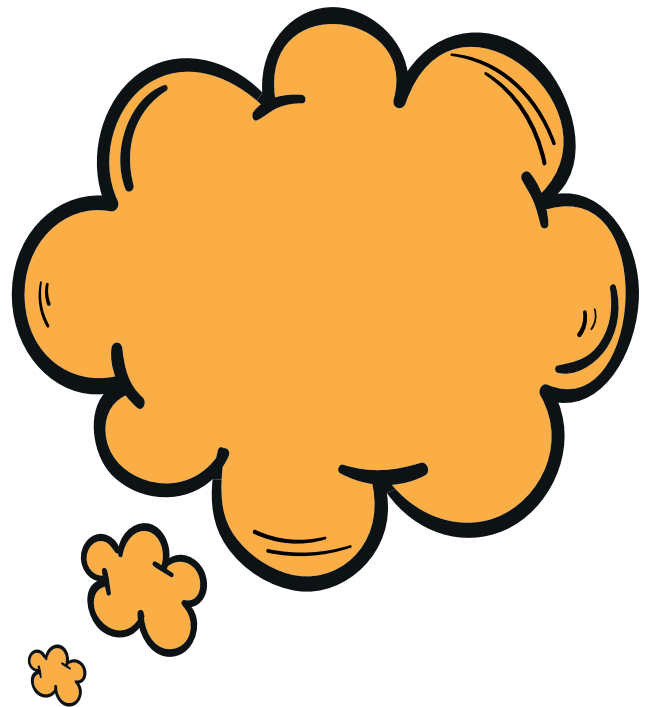
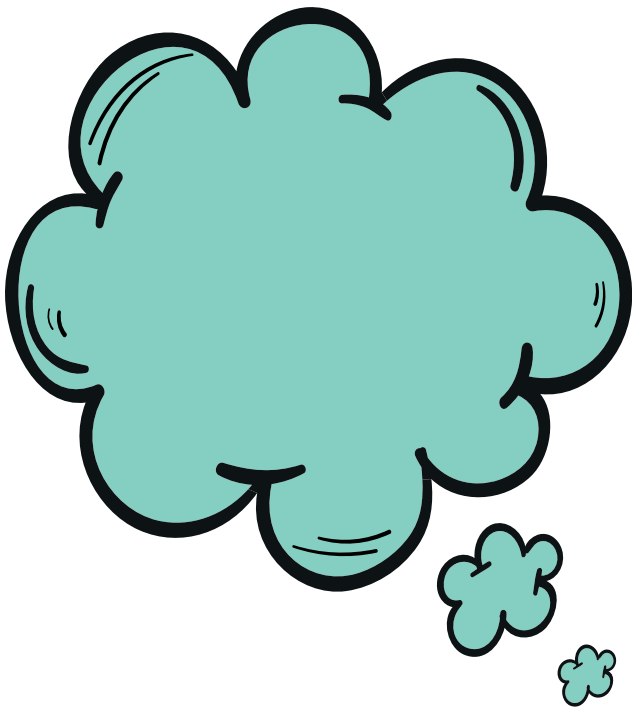
**HOW DID NATIONALISTS EXPERIENCE
THE UWC STRIKES**



Use the evidence in the sources to complete the activity below



**HOW DID UNIONISTS EXPERIENCE
THE UWC STRIKES**



ACTIVITY 5: SOURCE TASK

Study the sources below and answer the questions that follow.

Mervyn Gibson

I think it showed to me that Unionism, if it works together, can achieve something. It had one aim and that was to bring down the Executive and stop the council of Ireland and it achieved that aim by everybody having the same purpose. Everybody cooperating together and I believe if we do that again then we will face any threat that comes our way.

Using the testimony above and your contextual knowledge, give two reasons that explain what the aims of the UWC strike were

1.

2.

[2]

Jim Dillon

The Ulster Worker's strike was a complete success. It was well organised over a period of time, not rushed, brought about, and it was obviously coordinated. And what wasn't coordinated fell into place beautifully. I think perhaps there was a lot of good luck, good fortune, and everybody worked together because they thought their country's life blood was at stake and out of that we won at that time.

VOICES OF '74



Nottingham Trent University

