Your Parliament
A Guide to the Houses of the Oireachtas

Tithe an Oireachtais / Dáil Éireann / Seanad Éireann / Leinster House / 1 Taoiseach / 166 TDs / 1 Ceann Comhairle / 60 Senators / 1 Cathaoirleach / 15 Government Departments /

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The Houses of the Oireachtas – An Introduction

Oireachtas is an Irish word which is used to describe our parliament. In Ireland we have two Houses of Parliament, Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann.

Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann form a very important part of our democracy. Democracy is a type of government. It means that citizens have a say over how they are governed. We make our views known by voting at elections when we choose people to represent us in parliament.

People who are elected to Dáil Éireann are known as TDs. People who are elected to Seanad Éireann are known as Senators.

There are 166 TDs in the Dáil and they must decide who will form the Government. The Taoiseach then forms a government and the government take decisions about what type of laws we need and how much money we should spend on important things like schools and hospitals.

Every time the government wants to make a new law or when it decides how to spend money it has to present the plan to the Dáil. TDs will take a hard look at the plan and see if they agree with it. TDs will often take a vote to see if they want the plan to go ahead. Then they inform the Seanad of their plans.

As we choose the TDs and Senators who sit in Dáil Éireann and Seanad Éireann this means that our views are represented when decisions on new laws and policies are made. Decisions are made after the issues are looked at by the members of the Dáil and Seanad. The Government need a majority to get their policies passed. That way the views of all the people are heard. That is how democracy works.
QUI Za quiz: What is the name of the man who first suggested the idea of Dáil Éireann?

The name of the man who first suggested the idea of Dáil Éireann was James Fitzgerald. He lived in Kildare and was a wealthy man who owned a house in Dublin called Leinster House. James Fitzgerald proposed the idea of having a elected parliament in Ireland, which eventually became Dáil Éireann. His proposal was eventually adopted and Dáil Éireann was established in 1919. James Fitzgerald is remembered as a patriot and a visionary who helped to bring about Irish independence.