

Information for the core task

1. Learning aims for the task

1.1 Historical content

- Students can recall some information of who Roger Casement was.
- Students can recall the most relevant historical context surrounding Roger Casement's life.

1.2 Language skills

- Students are able to assemble the most important information from Casement's short biography.
- Students are able to map Casement's life on a world map and an Irish map.

2. Short description of the task

Students will read the short biography on Roger Casement's life. Furthermore, they will read some additional information on the historical events that are significant to Roger Casement's life. To demonstrate that students have understood the text, they will visually depict Casement's life on a world map.

Teachers should give the class about 30 minutes to work on the task by themselves, but then consolidate answers in class.

3. Time required to complete task

45 minutes.

4. Prerequisites

None.

5. Required material

No additional material required.

6. Main type of student activity/output

Reading comprehension.

7. Key skill(s) involved

Reading.

8. Primary text referenced

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

9. Secondary works cited

See bibliography at the end of the biography.

10. Further reading

A recommendation for a further reading would be "The Butterfly Collector" by Rebecca Solnit. This chapter traces Casement's life from his upbringing to his death. It is an easy read, but still gives slightly more detailed information on Casement's life than the biography by Biletz.

Solnit, Rebecca. *A Book of Migrations: Some Passages in Ireland*. 1997. Rev. paperback ed. London: Verso, 2011. 38-60.

TASK 1a: Read the short biography by Frank A. Biletz on Roger Casement's life. Highlight important aspects. Also read the additional information given in the squares.

Sir Roger Casement (1915)



Image 1. Photo of Roger Casement (Mitchell 6)

CASEMENT, SIR ROGER (1864-1916). Diplomat, humanitarian, and Irish nationalist. Casement was born in Dublin, the son of a British Army officer of Protestant background in Ulster and a Catholic mother from Co. Cork.

After the deaths of both parents, Protestant relatives in Co. Antrim [today part of Northern Ireland] raised him.

In 1883, Casement traveled to the Congo and spent most of

British colonial service

England began to build an empire in the 16th century by putting many countries around the world under their rule. On the map you see the British Empire as it was towards the late 19th century. Roger Casement worked in these colonies for Britain.



Image 2. British Empire around 1900 (Women in World History)

the next 20 years in West Africa and Central Africa working for various commercial¹ interests, and, in 1892, he joined the **British colonial service**. In 1903, he wrote a report on the Congo that exposed atrocities² on **rubber plantations**³.

In 1908, Casement became **consul general** in Rio de Janeiro, and his report on the brutal exploitation⁴ of **Putumayo** Indians working on rubber plantations in Peru was issued in 1911.

He was knighted⁵ for his humanitarian efforts in 1911. He retired from the consular service in 1913.

Putumayo's rubber exploitation

Putumayo is "a region of the Amazon rainforest" where many rubber trees grow (Burroughs 124). These trees were of interest for the Western world because they provided "crucial raw material that kept cars and machines going" (Farje). This is why companies exploited the region's rubber supply. To produce the most rubber, indigenous people were enslaved under cruel conditions to do the hard work.



Image 3. Slavery in Putumayo (Death in the Devil's Paradise)

¹ geschäftlich

² Gräueltat

³ Kautschukplantage

⁴ Ausbeutung

⁵ jdmn. zum Ritter schlagen

Meanwhile, Casement had become involved in the Irish language movement and nationalist politics, joining the **Gaelic League** in 1903 and the **Irish Volunteers** in 1913. He published an open letter in 1914, condemning British government policies in Ireland.

When World War I began, he went to Germany in an unsuccessful attempt to form an Irish brigade⁶ from among Irish prisoners of war to fight the British Empire, and he also sought arms for an Irish rebellion.

Upon Casement's return to Ireland on a German submarine in April 1916, just before the **Easter Rising**, the **Royal Irish Constabulary**⁷ captured him near Tralee, in Co. Kerry.

During his subsequent trial, British officials privately spread insinuations⁸ about Casement's homosexuality on the basis of the so-called "Black Diaries," which had purportedly⁹ been discovered among his possessions, to circumvent¹⁰ efforts to gain him leniency¹¹.

Just before he was hanged on 3 August 1916, he converted to Catholicism.

Casement's reported homosexuality made him a problematic national martyr in the socially conservative Irish Free State. Debates continue over the authenticity of the diaries, although the scholarly consensus now accepts them.

In 1965, after a protracted campaign, the British and Irish governments agreed to repatriate¹² Casement's remains, and they were interred in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, after a state funeral.

⁶ Trupp/Gruppe

⁷ Polizei

⁸ Anspielung/Unterstellung

⁹ angeblich

¹⁰ verhindern

¹¹ Nachsicht

¹² jmdn. in die Heimat zurückbringen

Irish history

In 1800 "Ireland [...] merged with Great Britain to form the United Kingdom of Great Britain" (Easter Rising). From then on, Ireland was governed by Britain. "During the 19th century, groups of Irish nationalists opposed this arrangement in varying degrees" (Easter Rising). Two such groups are the following:

"**The Gaelic League** was founded in 1893 with the aim of restoring the Irish language" (Gaelic League). This helped establish a sense of an Irish identity in people.

"**The Irish Volunteers** was a military organization established in 1913 by Irish nationalists" (Irish Volunteers).

One climax of this opposition to British rule over Ireland was the **Easter Rising**. On Easter Monday of 1916 "a group of Irish nationalists proclaimed the establishment of the Irish Republic" and they "staged rebellion against the British government in Ireland" (Easter Rising).



Image 4. Easter Rising (Irish Volunteers)

Bibliography

- “Black and White World Map with Countries.” *Printablee*, 19 Nov. 2021, www.printablee.com/post_black-and-white-world-map-printable_396505/.
- Burroughs, Robert M. *Travel Writing and Atrocities: Eyewitness Accounts of Colonialism in the Congo, Angola, and the Putumayo*. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Currivan, Lorraine. “Map of Counties of Ireland.” *ResearchGate*, 19 Nov. 2021, www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-counties-of-Ireland_fig7_256483530.
- “Death in the Devil’s Paradise.” *Survival*, 19 Nov. 2021, www.survivalinternational.org/articles/3282-rubber-boom.
- “Easter Rising.” *History*, 19 Nov. 2021, www.history.com/topics/british-history/easter-rising.
- Farje, Javier. “The Putumayo Atrocities.” *Latin America Bureau*, 19 Nov. 2021, lab.org.uk/the-putumayo-atrocities/.
- “History of the Irish Volunteers.” *Irish Volunteers*, 19 Nov. 2021, irishvolunteers.org/pages/history-of-the-irish-volunteers/.
- Mitchell, Angus. “A Strange Chapter of Irish History: Sir Roger Casement, Germany and the 1916 Rising.” *Field Day Review*, 2012, pp. 4-21.
- “The Gaelic League.” *Ask About Ireland*, 19 Nov 2021, www.askaboutireland.ie/learning-zone/primary-students/looking-at-places/meath/fr.-eugene-ogrowney/the-gaelic-league/.
- “Women in World History.” *Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media*, 19 Nov. 2021, chnm.gmu.edu/wwh/modules/lesson8/lesson8.php?s=0#.

TASK 1b: Map Casement's travels and milestones on a world map. Make sure to include the most important dates and places and what Casement did in those places. The squares provide you with space to write down the most important information.

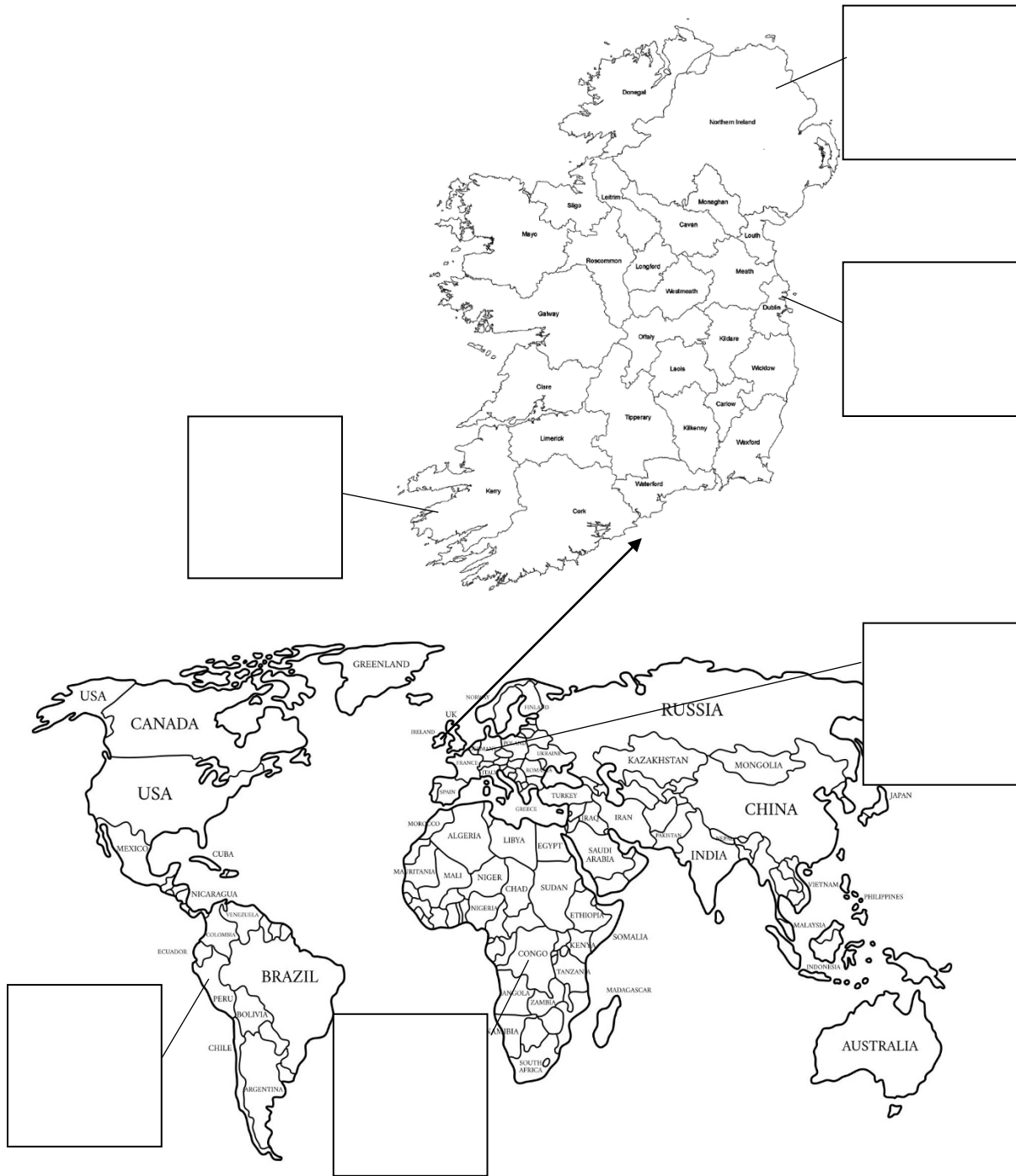


Image 5. Top map: Irish Map with Counties (Currivan)

Image 6. Bottom map: World Map (Black and White)

Information for additional task 1

1. Learning aims for the task

1.1 Historical content

- Students can list different aspects that compose Roger Casement's persona.

1.2 Language skills

- Students are able to locate descriptions/names of Casement in the poem "The Choice".
- Students are able to recognize different nuances of words.
- Students have a basic understanding of the structure of a poem: What is a stanza? What is a line?

2. Short description of the task

Students will read the poem "The Choice" by Dora Sigerson Shorter. Then, they will extract the names given to him from the poem. These names will then be classified into neutral, formal and emotional names, according to their meaning. The same classification can be done with additional names that fit Roger Casement.

Teachers should give the class 20-25 minutes to work on the task by themselves, but then consolidate answers in class.

3. Time required to complete task

35 minutes.

4. Prerequisites

The core task must be completed beforehand.

5. Required material

No additional material required.

6. Main type of student activity/output

Language practice: Vocabulary and Reading comprehension.

7. Key skill(s) involved

Reading.

8. Primary text referenced

Shorter, Dora Sigerson. "The Choice." *Sixteen Dead Men and Other Poems of Easter Week*. New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1919. 39–41.

9. Secondary works cited

"Banshee." *Engolee*, 19 Nov. 2021,
engolee.info/banshee-2/#:~:text=A%20banshee%20is%20a%20female%20spirit%20in%20Irish,of%20the%20family%20to%20which%20she%20is%20attached.

Bath, Michael and Tom Furniss. *Reading Poetry: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Ó Síocháin, Séamus. "Roger Casement's Vision of Freedom." *Roger Casement in Irish and World History*. Ed. Mary E. Daly. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2005. 1–10.

10. Further reading

Although the task is simply asking students to detect the nuances of words, teachers can benefit from some background knowledge on what 'denotations' and 'connotations' are. The following work provides this information.

Johnson, Lee. "How to Teach Connotation and Denotation." *The Classroom*, 19 Nov. 2021, www.theclassroom.com/teach-connotation-denotation-8736782.html.

The Choice

Task 1a: Read the following poem, which was written about Roger Casement in 1919 by Dora Sigerson Shorter. Pay special attention to the first line of each stanza.

[1] THIS Consul Casement – he who heard the
cry

Of stricken¹ people – and who in his fight
To lift the torture load from broken men,
[5] And shield sad women from eternal night,
Went through lone, hot and fevered foreign
lands.

For doomèd Casement, slaves that he raised up
Pray with strong voices, so a wide world hears.
[10] Men saved from anguish², women saved from
shame,
He dried your children’s tears!
He gave you life – for him lift pleading³ hands.

Sir Roger Casement, honoured for his years
[15] Of stress and struggle, of fatigue and work,
What is the claim of his frail human needs
For arduous⁴ hours he did not shun⁵ nor shirk⁶,
A King’s reward, a royal friendliness!

For honoured Casement titles and renown,
[20] A future great with promise, all life’s page
Writ in gold letters, and a path so soft
One could not hear the coming of old age
To point an honoured tomb⁷ that nations bless.

Ah! Irish Casement, in the roar of war
[25] That stung his blood and whipped his manhood’s
fire.
What did he hear upon red shaken earth,
Where little nations struggle and expire?
Some banshee cry upon the hot wind thrills!

Structure of a poem

“[P]oetry is set out on the page in **lines** (dt.: Verse) whose length is decided by the author (Furniss and Bath 14). These lines are organized into groups, which are called **stanzas** (dt.: Strophe).

Banshee

In Irish and Scottish folklore, a banshee is a female spirit, whose cries and screams are only heard by someone who will soon die.



Image 7. Banshee (Banshee)

¹ angeschlagen

² Qual

³ flehentlich

⁴ mühselig

⁵ meiden

⁶ sich vor etw. drücken

⁷ Grab

[30] And Roger Casement – he who freed the slave,
 Made sad babes smile and tortured women hope,
 Flung all aside, King’s honours and great years,
 To take for finis here a hempen⁸ rope,
 And banshee cries upon far Irish hills.

Task 1b: What names are given to Roger Casement in the first line of each stanza? Write down the names on the lines below.

Task 1c: In what way do these words describe Roger Casement? Place them in one of the three columns.

Neutral description	Formal description	Emotional description

Task 1d: There are further descriptions of Roger Casement: Place them in the right column of the above table.

<p>(1) Roddie, his pet name (Ó Síocháin 5) (2) cousin (3) diplomat (4) traveler (5) nationalist (6) orphan (7) traitor</p>
--

⁸ hanfen

Information for additional task 2

1. Learning aims for the task

1.1 Historical content

No new information.

1.2 Language skills

- Students are able to employ modal verbs to speculate about Casement's life in the past tense.
- Students are able to compose sentences that are loosely based on their readings of "The Choice" or the short biography by Frank A. Biletz.

2. Short description of the task (what will the students be doing?)

Students will practice the grammar topic of "Modal Verbs for Speculation and Deduction". Students are asked to write six sentences in which they speculate about Roger Casement's life/actions/personality/etc. As a basis for their speculations students should take the short biography by Frank A. Biletz from core task 1 and/or the poem "The Choice" by Dora Sigerson Shorter from additional task 1.

After about 15-20 minutes the teacher should consolidate the task. They can collect sentences from students and use these examples to formulate the grammar structure of such speculative sentences in the past.

3. Time required to complete task

25-30 minutes.

4. Prerequisites

The core task must be completed beforehand.

The additional task 1 should be completed beforehand.

5. Required material

No additional material required.

6. Main type of student activity/output

Language practice: Grammar.

Reading comprehension.

7. Key skill(s) involved

Writing.

8. Primary text referenced

None.

9. Secondary works cited

None.

10. Further reading

Some more information about "Modal Verbs for Speculation and Deduction" can be found in the student textbook *Ready for First* by Roy Norris. This might be relevant if one wants to know which modal verbs express a possibility and which express certainty, and to know which verb form is used after the modal verbs.

Norris, Roy. *Ready for First: Coursebook with eBook and Key*. London: Macmillan Education, 2013.

Task 2: Speculating and deducing about the past.

From the previous reading, we get an idea of Roger Casement's persona, what he was like and what he did. Still, there are aspects of his identity and actions left in the dark. We can only speculate about certain events of his life or deduce¹ information from a poem like "The Choice".

Write 6 sentences in the past on Casement identity, personality, or actions using the modal verbs "must", "might", "could", "may", and "can't". Make sure to use each modal verb at least once and to use the correct verb form.

For example: Roger Casement must have loved traveling to foreign countries.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

¹ ableiten

Information for additional task 3

1. Learning aims for the task

1.1 Historical content

- Students can recall some information in regard to Casement's identity as an Irishman, as an (unsuccessful) leader and as a person belonging to the 'upper class'.
- Students can recall Casement's attempt to form an Irish brigade in Germany.
- Students can name some of the conflicts at the time of WWI.
- Students can list the UK's different regional accents of today and can name the relation of accents and discrimination.
- Students are able to compare this understanding of accents to their knowledge/perception of English accents.

1.2 Language skills

- Students practice their speaking and listening skills.

2. Short description of the task (what will the students be doing?)

Students will practice their speaking skills by reading through the excerpt aloud together. Then they will answer questions that gear them towards the topic of accents. To give them further understanding of the topic of regional accents within the UK they will watch a video of about three minutes. Then, students can discuss questions that help them relate the topic to their own lives (i.e., what encounters with different English accents have they made already?).

After the completion of task 3a, 3b and 3c a short class consolidation should take place, for the next aspect will be watching the video. Students should be given time to read through the questions regarding the video first and the video should be played twice. Questions regarding the video should be consolidated in class. Exercise 3e is open-end and needs no consolidation.

3. Time required to complete task

45 minutes.

4. Prerequisites

The core task must be completed beforehand.

5. Required material

"Accentism: New Classism Determines Social Status in UK." *Youtube*, uploaded by RT, 12 Oct. 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8OLWDOvJ9E.

6. Main type of student activity/output

Reading comprehension.

Language production.

7. Key skill(s) involved

Speaking and listening skills.

8. Primary text referenced

Eaton, Michael. "Ruling Passions: The Story of Roger Casement." *Critical Quarterly*, 41, 1, 1999, pp. 82-126.

9. Secondary works cited

Doran, Fionnuala. *The Trial of Roger Casement*. London: SelfMadeHero, 2016.

10. Relevant secondary sources

As the task heavily revolves around English accents, some background reading on this topic can be beneficiary for teachers. The following book offers a nice introduction into the topic of English accents.

Hughes, Arthur, Peter Trudgill, and Dominic Watt. *English Accents and Dialects: An Introduction to Social and Regional Varieties of English in the British Isles*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Task 3a: Form groups of five students. Divide the speaking parts amongst one another. Read through the excerpt from the screenplay “Ruling Passions: The story of Roger Casement” together.

List of roles

1st person: to read the stage directions/background information

2nd person: Roger 1

3rd person: Roger 2

4th person: POW 1, POW 3

5th person: POW 2, POW 4, POW 5

Ext. Limburg. Day.

[1] Inside the prison camp compound a tightly packed group of washed-out, surly IRISH POWs¹ are shivering in their sodden British Army greatcoats. They are being mustered by GERMAN GUARDS as Roger enters with the General and the Camp COMMANDANT Major. Roger puts down his umbrella and shakes it. He looks over at them, trying hard to be official:

ROGER [1]: Good day, men. I trust you are being treated decently?

[8] There is a slight undertone of sarcastic response.

ROGER [1]: Like you, my friends, I am an Irishman...

POW 1 (under his breath): You don't fecking sound like one.

[12] One of the guards glares at him, shutting him up.

ROGER [1]: Germany is not at war with people like us... but with England. And who among you can deny that England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity? The Imperial German Government has given me its full assurance² that it desires, like us, national independence for our dear land.

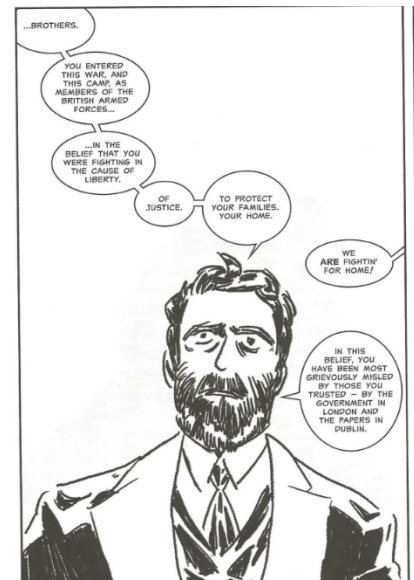


Image 8. Casement in Germany (Doran)

[18] The sweat starts to break out on Roger's brow – the recurrence of malarial fever. He tries to ignore it.

ROGER [2]: Who among you now will join me to wear the proud badge of an Irish Brigade raised for the sole purpose or returning to our shores to fight? To fight for

¹ Prisoners of war

² Versprechen/Zusicherung

neither King nor Kaiser³ but for Ourselves Alone... And to usher⁴ in, at last, a new dawn of freedom for the land we all love.

[24] There is slow hand clapping and facetious⁵ singing:

POWs (*singing*): Belgium put the kaibosh on the Kaiser
England took a stick and made him sore...⁶

ROGER [2]: I am not here to coerce⁷ you – you've been coerced enough.
I seek only willing volunteers. We are Irishmen...

POW 3: We're British soldiers...

POW 2: Soldiers of the King.

POW 1: Aye and proud of it!

[32] The mood of the crowd is becoming uglier. They are not listening to him.

POW 4: How much are they paying you, mister?

One of them pushes forward and jostles⁸ Roger.

POW 5: You fecking traitor!

ROGER [2]: Please... please...

[37] But as others surge⁹ forward, he has to pick up his umbrella and absurdly defends himself, as the Guards rush back into the room and pull Roger out of the fray.

³ King as the head of England, and the Kaiser as the monarch of Germany

⁴ einführen

⁵ scherhaft

⁶ popular British patriotic song of World War I

⁷ zwingen

⁸ anrempeIn

⁹ drängen

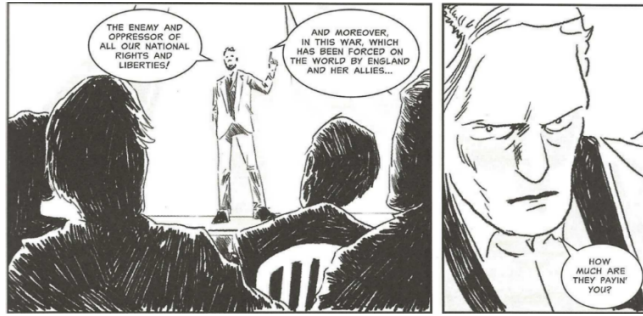


Image 9. Casement in Germany (Doran)

Task 3b: After reading the excerpt, discuss in groups between which nations/individual people there are conflicts (in a larger context, but also just looking at this particular scene). Find at least two conflicts.

Conflict 1:

Conflict 2:

Task 3c: Why do the soldiers not trust Roger Casement? Look closely at line 10-11 (“You don’t fecking sound like one”). What role do accents play?

3d: Watch the video on ‘accentism’. Answer the following questions:

1. From which regions does the video introduce accents?

2. What is the name of the Queen’s English?

3. What forms of discrimination exist? Name three examples.

4. What do people think when they hear someone with a strong regional accent?

5. What is the overall connection the video makes between regional accents and (good) jobs?

Task 3e: Work with a partner or in groups of threes. Discuss your perception of English accents. Answer the following questions:

1. Which English accents do you know?
2. Which ones do you (dis-)like? Why?
3. Which associations do you have with particular accents?

Information for additional task 4

1. Learning aims for the task

1.1 Historical content

No new information.

1.2 Language skills

- Students are able to compose their own short essays based on the background reading, which is an excerpt from *Ruling Passions* by Michael Eaton, provided in additional task 3.

2. Short description of the task

Students will practice their writing skills through a writing prompt that relates to Casement's appearance in the German prisoner-of-war camp and his attempt to form an Irish brigade.

3. Time required to complete task

15-20 minutes.

4. Prerequisites

The core task must be completed beforehand.

The additional task 3 must be completed beforehand.

5. Required material

No additional material required.

6. Main type of student activity/output

Language production.

7. Key skill(s) involved

Writing.

8. Primary text referenced

None.

11. Secondary works cited

Doran, Fionnuala. *The Trial of Roger Casement*. London: SelfMadeHero, 2016.

12. Relevant secondary sources

A recommended reading to further one's understanding of Casement's time in Germany would be the graphic novel *The Trial of Roger Casement* by Doran, which includes this episode of his life. Through the graphic illustration one is given an impression of what this time was like for him.

