



The General Election of 2020 saw a huge increase in support for the Mary Lou McDonald led Sinn Féin Party. Sinn Féin won 24.5 % of the total vote countrywide and took 37 seats. They have not had this many seats since 1922. Fianna Fáil won the highest number of seats 38, followed by Fine Gael with 35 seats. The Green Party also saw a rise in popularity and won 12 seats, Labour won 6, the Social Democrats won 6, Solidarity People before Profit won 5 and Independents and others 21. Many well-known former TDs and ministers lost their seats among them Shane Ross, former Minister for Sport, Regina Doherty, former Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Catherine Zappone, Minister for Children and former Labour Party leader and former minister Joan Burton.

Many of these lost out to first time winners. 48 first time TDs were elected, 17 of them from Sinn Féin and 9 from the Green Party. It is seen as a vote by the people for changes to be made. The issues of homelessness, hospital waiting lists, hospital trolley crisis and the increase in the retirement age were reported as being the top concerns.

There are a total of 160 TDs elected to the Dáil, but in order to form a government a party needs to have the backing of 80 TDs. As no one party has 80 seats, it now means that 2 or more parties and Independents will have to come together to form a government.

Prior to the election both Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael had ruled out ever joining with Sinn Féin but many believe that they will have to rethink this if they wish to be in government. Mary Lou McDonald has said she wants to form a government without either of the 2 big parties but has not totally ruled it out. If she were to become Taoiseach, she would be the first woman ever to hold this post. So, while each party dances around each other we must wait and see who the Taoiseach will be and who will lead the 33<sup>rd</sup> Dáil when it returns on February 20.

If the different parties can't find common ground on which to agree, we could well be looking at another election in the near future.

## 2020 A Leap Year

A Leap Year is a calendar year that occurs every 4 years and has 366 days instead of the usual 365. The extra day is added to the month of February giving it 29 days instead of the usual 28. Have you ever wondered why we need to have this leap year with its extra day every 4 years?

Day and night, seasons of the year and our calendar year are all set according to the earth rotating around the sun. It takes the earth 365 days, 5 hours 48 minutes and 45 seconds to revolve around the sun every year. As we only have 365 days in a calendar year, each year we move forward 6 hours. Over 100 years this could lead to losing as much as 24 days. Over time this would mean changes to our seasons, we could end up having winter in July and Summer in December. So by adding a day every 4 years we keep our calendar in line with the earth and the sun.

The Roman emperor Julius Caesar was the first to introduce the leap year over 2000 years ago.

There are many traditions attached to leap years. The most well-known being that February 29 is the day when a woman can propose to a man rather than the other way around. In days gone by it was said that if a woman proposed to a man and if he refused then he had to buy her 12 pairs of gloves. It seems that the gloves were to cover her hands that were without an engagement ring and so save her embarrassment.

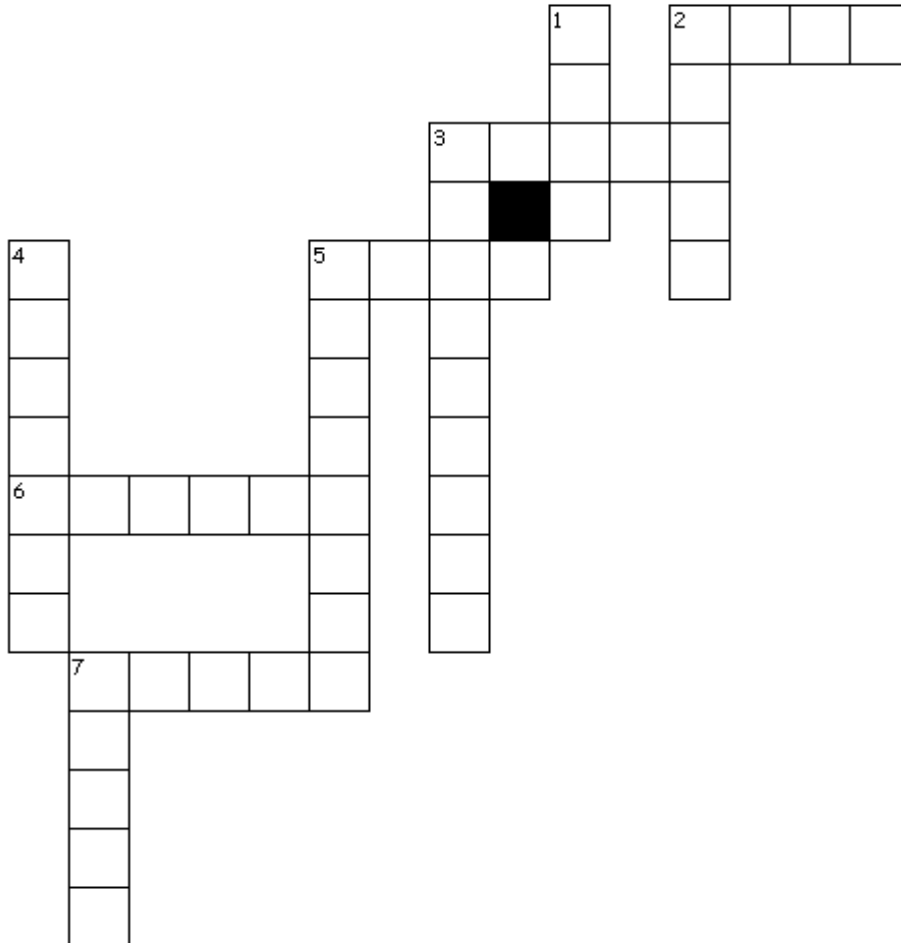
If you happened to be born on February 29 then you only get to have a birthday every 4 years. However, most people will celebrate their birthday either on February 28 or March 1.

**K is always silent when it is followed by n as in kn**

know	knew	kneel	knife	knot
known	knit	knead	knives	knuckle
knowledge	knee	knight	knob	knapsack

**Crossword**

All the answers to the clues are words beginning with kn, from the list above



**Across**

- 2. She fell and cut her \_\_\_\_ (4)
- 3. Be careful, that \_\_\_\_ is sharp. (5)
- 5. Tie this on your tie (4)
- 6. Use different \_\_\_\_\_ to cut different types of meat (6)
- 7. Do not \_\_\_\_ on the door, use the doorbell (5)

**Down**

- 1. Do this with needles and thread (4)
- 2. When you get down on your knees (5)
- 3. Information (11)
- 4. Part of your finger on the back of your hand (7)
- 5. A bag you carry on your back. (8)
- 7. You do this when you are making bread (5)

**Maths**

1. Last week Peter worked 4 hours 15 minutes on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. He worked 4 hours and 45 mins on Wednesday and 6 ½ hours on Friday.
  - a. How many hours in total did he work last week?
  - b. His hourly rate of pay is €12, how much did he earn?
  - c. He is due a wage increase of 25%. What will be his new hourly rate?
2. 4 friends have won €20,000 in a raffle.
  - John gets ½ the money.
  - Mary gets ⅓ of the money.
  - Ann gets ¼ of the money.
  - Paul gets the rest.
  - a. How much does each person get?
3. My car can travel 120km for €20 of petrol. My workplace is 30 km from my home. I drive there and back 5 days a week.
  - a. How many km do I drive each week?
  - b. How much money do I spend on petrol?

answers

Q1 a 24 b €288 c €15
Q2 a John €10,000 Mary €4000
Ann €5000 Paul €1000
Q3 a 300km b €50

Congratulations to Hannah from Waterford who is the winner of our Christmas competition. Well done!