

## EXAMEN D'ENTREE EN DEUXIEME ANNEE 2024

Epreuve de Langue (durée conseillée 1h30)

### ANGLAIS

*Adapted from The Guardian, 25 October 2023*

By [Emma DeSouza](#)

The DUP leader, Jeffrey Donaldson, expressed his confidence this week that there won't be a united Ireland in his lifetime. But as support for unionism wanes among Northern Ireland's young people, could the so-called peace babies have a different future in mind?

A recent Lucid Talk/Sunday Times survey [showed](#) that 57% of 18 to 24-year-olds in Northern Ireland would vote "yes" to reunifying Ireland if a border poll were held today, despite there being no official campaign or unity plan in place. More than 600,000 people have been born in Northern Ireland since the signing of the Good Friday agreement, and they have grown up during a sustained period of peace that has given rise to a new set of priorities. This is a generation that wants more rights, more progressive change – and to confine the division of the past to the dustbin of history. Last month, I asked young people at Belfast's One Young World summit whether the picture painted by polling rings true. I spoke to 25-year-old Tara Grace Connolly, "Why would we want to stay part of a union that fails to show basic respect to its own citizens?" she told me.

For 19-year-old student Ellie-Jo Taylor, Brexit fundamentally changed the pull of a united Ireland among younger generations. "We are campaigning for our future, for a return to the [European Union](#) within a united Ireland," she told me. "We have an opportunity to create an entirely new country." Since the Brexit vote in 2016, conversations around reunification have become mainstream.

Universities across Ireland and the UK are undertaking new research on [constitutional change](#); Ireland's upper chamber, Seanad Éireann, is [examining Ireland's constitutional future](#); and grassroots campaign groups have been established to prepare for a referendum. On the pro-union side, there are groups such as former first minister Arlene Foster's Together UK. On the pro-reunification side, Ireland's Future has published several papers and organised large-scale conferences to discuss what a united Ireland could look like.

While politics is still stuck in the mire, Northern Ireland's peace babies have their focus trained on climate crisis, human rights, education and mental health. Unburdened by the historically entrenched concepts of identity that came to define prior generations, most 18 to 24-year-olds state they do not identify as unionist or nationalist, according to the 2022 Northern Ireland Life and Times [Survey](#).

And who can blame them? In no other region of the United Kingdom are people defined by whether they support the union or if they're nationalist. And so the binary, black-and-white worldview threaded throughout the fabric of Northern Ireland's history feels increasingly out of step with a generation that has a variety of political ideologies such as environmentalism, feminism or liberalism to take inspiration from. For Emma Murphy, a 24-year-old graduate, identity is still important – but it just “manifests in a different way”. “Young people might identify more with being a person of colour, or with being from an LGBTQ+ community,” she says.

The gap between generations is growing. Forty-five percent of respondents to the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey aged 18 to 24 identified as more Irish than British, in stark contrast with the 15% of 18 to 24-year-olds who identified as unionist. It is of little surprise that 41% of respondents over 65 years old identified as more British than Irish, with this age cohort also leaning predominantly unionist (43%). The stark difference is due to a tectonic shift in societal consciousness and a growing appetite for progressive politics.

The pulls for a united Ireland are many. A functioning government, better human rights protections, a return to the EU – to name only a few. In contrast, Northern Ireland's political system is a dysfunctional basket case, and increasingly unattractive to today's young people. We have no government, no anti-poverty strategy and public services are buckling. Even if the zombie corpse of Stormont is revived it won't last, and neither will the nation of Northern Ireland. It's only a matter of time before the people of Ireland are given the opportunity to envisage the landscape they want to see take shape on the horizon.

## Questions

### I. Compréhension écrite. (8 points)

In your own words (please do NOT quote), answer the following questions about the text, using complete sentences (concise answers are expected).

1. According to Emma DeSouza, to what extent are young people in Northern Ireland different from the previous generation ? (3 pts)
2. What were the triggering factors for the change in mindsets ? (3 pts)
3. According to the article, are unionists likely to win? Why/why not ? (1 pt)
4. According to the author, what might a referendum lead to ? (1 pt)

### II. Essay. 350 words +/- 10% (12 points)

Are referendums good for democracy ?

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