

# Getting ready to search the 1926 Census

## AGI Irish Census Records

### CENSUS OF THE IRISH FREE STATE, 1926.

The returns from the 1926 Census of Ireland will be released by the National Archives of Ireland on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2026, exactly 100 years after it was enumerated.

The census returns will be published on the website of the National Archives of Ireland ([nationalarchives.ie](http://nationalarchives.ie)) and will be entirely free to access.

To make the most of the upcoming release, there are a few steps that can be taken in advance, to ensure that your ancestors can be located and their census return explored.

#### Who are you searching for:

- **Identify** the ancestor or ancestors that were alive in April 1926, who should be documented in the census.
- Try to **establish their approximate age**. The 1926 census reported ages in years and months, which is quite specific, however some older household members may not have reported an accurate age in 1926. Ages can be determined from birth and death registrations ([www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie)), headstones or earlier census returns (1901 and 1911 census).
- Try to **identify other members of the same household**, such as siblings, parents or spouse. If your ancestor was not in the family home on the night the census was enumerated, searching for their siblings, parents or spouse should help to locate the family home.
- Try to **establish where your ancestor was born**. The 1926 census records townland or town and county of birth. Having this information in advance of your search may help to identify the correct ancestor, particularly if they have a common name. Their place of birth will be recorded on their birth registration ([www.irishgenealogy.ie](http://www.irishgenealogy.ie)).

#### Where did they live:

- Try to **establish where your ancestor was residing** in April 1926. If they cannot be located using a name search, you can navigate to the townland where they were residing, to locate their census return.
- **Addresses** should be recorded on birth, marriage and death certificates for vital events that took place closest to the time of the census.

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- Familiarise yourself with the relevant **administrative divisions**, so that you can easily navigate to the correct townland. The census is organised by townland, **District Electoral Division (DED)** and county. Identifying the correct DED can sometimes be challenging.
- Try using the **placename search** at [www.johngrenham.com](http://www.johngrenham.com) to locate your townland in the 1901 and 1911 census. The Enumerators Returns in 1901 and 1911 will provide you with the DED. The Irish Genealogical Research Society has published the 1901 edition of the Index of Townlands, which will identify DEDs and townlands along with all other land divisions [www.irishancestors.ie/index-of-townlands-1901-87](http://www.irishancestors.ie/index-of-townlands-1901-87). As will a search at [townlands.ie](http://townlands.ie). Confirming the DED or ED of the townland where your ancestor resided will greatly assist your research.
- In cities, **Wards** are used as administrative divisions, rather than District Electoral Divisions. Thom's Directory (Dublin) or other post office or street directories can be used to identify the relevant Ward. Copies of Thom's Directory can be browsed at Ancestry and Findmypast.ie and free at [www.swilson.info](http://www.swilson.info).

### What language did they use:

- Familiarise yourself with the **Irish spelling** of your ancestor's first and surnames. It is possible they filled their census return in Irish, in which case they will not be found using the English spelling.
- It may be worth searching only by the Irish first name and filtering your results by county and DED and reviewing the resulting Irish language surnames for an approximate match.

There were **two forms** filed during the enumeration of the 1926 Census, the Household Return (Form A) and the Enumerator's or House and Building Return (Form B)

The Household Return recorded the name, age (in years and months), marital status, for those over 15 and 'orphanhood' of those under 15, birthplace (townland and county), language, religion, occupation (including employer), length of time married and number of children born. This return also records the number of acres occupied.



Sample Form: [National Archives of Ireland - 1926 Form A](#)

The Enumerator's Return, Form B (House and Building) recorded a description of the building, whether it was inhabited or uninhabited followed by details of the family, including the number of families in the house, name of the head of household and number of males and females in each household.



Sample Form: [National Archives of Ireland - 1926 Form B](#)

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