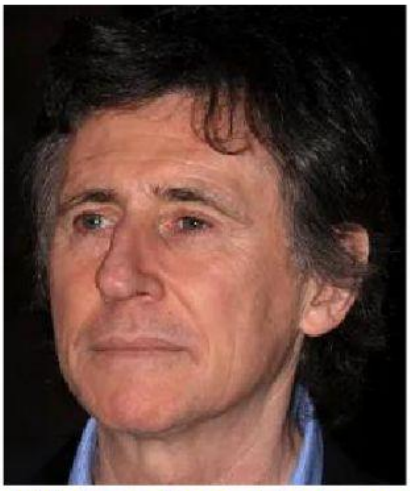
Gabriel Byrne – Dublin born actor, writer, director and producer



Gabriel Byrne is one of Ireland's most famous and successful actors of the last 50 years. He has starred in several major films including *Miller's Crossing, The Usual Suspects* and *End of Days*.

He has won several awards for his acting and is also a writer, director and producer. A film he co-produced, *In the Name of the Father*, was nominated for an Academy Award.

Byrne's Early life

Byrne was born in Dublin in 1950. He was raised as a Roman Catholic and trained to be a priest when he was a child. Several years later he revealed that he had been sexually abused by priests.

He realised he had no intention of becoming a priest and studied archaeology and linguistics at Trinity College Dublin. He was fluent in Irish by the end of his course. During his 20s, Byrne had many jobs including archaeologist, cook and school teacher.

Acting career begins

He started acting when he was 29. He appeared on stage at the Focus Theatre and Abbey Theatre in Dublin. He made his TV debut playing Pat Barry on the Irish TV series *The Riordans.*

He continued in the role for the spin-off series Bracken. He won his first acting award – the Jacob's Award for Best Actor in a Television Series for his performance in *Bracker*.

He soon moved to the big screen and in 1981 he appeared in his first movie – *Excalibur*. The film was about King Arthur and the Round Table. It also helped to launch the career of Liam Neeson.

From there, Byrne's career went from strength to strength. He appeared in several more films during the 1980s. He had starring roles in *Defence of the Realm, Gothic* and the TV series *Christopher Columbus*.

Perhaps the most significant movie Byrne made during this time was *Siesta*. He starred opposite Ellen Barkin, who he would later marry.

Success in the 1990s

During the 1990s, Byrne's career trajectory continued to rise. He starred in the Coen Brother's gangster movie, *Miller's Crossing*. He also starred in movies such as *The Usual Suspects, Point of No Return, Cool World, Stigmata* and several more.

The 1990s also saw Byrne branch out into other areas of the industry. He was associate producer of the 1990 movie *Into the West*. The movie was about Irish Travellers and is considered one of the best films to come out of Ireland.

Byrne later became the first person to write a TV series in Irish – *Draíocht*, which appeared on TG4 in 1996. That year he also wrote, produced and appeared in the movie *The Last of the High Kings.*

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Hit movies in the 2000s

In the 2000s, Byrne continued to write, produce and star in films. He starred in the critically acclaimed thriller *Spider* in 2002.

He also starred in films such as *Ghost Ship, Wah-Wah, Emotional Arithmetic* and *Vanity Fair*. He also starred in the US TV drama *In Treatment*, a series about a psychologist.

Byrne's career is still going strong and in the 2010s he has starred in *I Anna, All Things to All Men* and *Vampire Academy*. He has also featured in TV series such as *Secret State* and *Vikings*.

Write questions to go with these answers based on the text.

1 _____?

When he was a child.

2 _____?

At Trinity College Dublin.

3 _____?

He worked as an archaeologist, cook and school teacher.

4 _____?

When he was 29.

5 _____?

On the Irish TV series The Riordans.

6 _____?

For his performance in Bracker.

7 _____?

Excalibur.

8 _____?

Ellen Barkin.

9 _____?

It is about Irish Travellers.

10 _____?

In the Name of the Father.

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