Ireland Before the Great Irish Famine

Student Activities:

How to Grow Potatoes

BACKGROUND

This activity will provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate their competence in setting up and executing a scientific experiment involving observing and recording plants growing under different conditions.

This activity also provides teachers an opportunity to inform students that potatoes are grown commercially in all 50 American states, and that one of the most important growing regions is in New York State.

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *A Diet of Potatoes: Is it a Healthy Diet?,* and *The Amazing Potato.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Best Potatoes are Those Grown at Home

Growing a Potato

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Eames-Sheavly, Marcia and Farrell, Tracy. *The Humble Potato: Underground Gold.* Ithaca: Media Services, 1995.

Wood, Robert W. "How to Sprout a Potato," *Science for Kids: 39 Easy Plant Biology Experiments*. Blue Ridge, PA: TAB, 1991. pp. 87-89.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

6" bowls	potatoes	sand
potting soil	plastic bags	fertilizer

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Observe and record the growth of a potato.

Hypothesize about the results of changing conditions when growing a potato.

Explain why the growth of potatoes was critical to the Irish people in the 19th century, and how the potato blight devastated the potato crop, resulting in the Great Irish Famine.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

MST 4: Students will understand and apply scientific concepts, principles, and theories pertaining to the physical setting and living environment and recognize the historical development of ideas in science.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Study about different world cultures and civilizations focusing on their accomplishments, contributions, values, beliefs, and traditions.

Know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, foods, and religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures and civilizations.

Know some important historic events and developments of past civilizations.

Elaborate on basic scientific and personal explanations of natural phenomena.

Devise ways of making observations to test proposed explanations.

Carry out research plans.

Use charts to organize observations.

Explain how factors in the environment affect changes.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- evaluate and connect evidence
- observe and conclude
- communicate results of research and projects
- gather information
- interpret information and data
- make generalizations

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Science

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Distribute the handout *Growing a Potato*. Have students fill a bowl half full of damp sand, cut a potato in half and plant each half with the cut side down in the sand. Cover the bowl with food wrap or put it into a plastic bag with the end tied tightly. Then put the bowl into a dark place. Students should make careful note of what happens and draw the potato plant as it grows.
2. When students see sprouts (offshoots) beginning to grow from the eyes of the potato halves, they should remove the wrap and put the potato plants in a sunny spot. (Have students ever seen shoots growing from potatoes left for a while in a bag in the vegetable drawer?) Students should let their potatoes grow a little more in the bowl before they plant the potatoes in pots with potting soil. Each part of a potato with an eye, or little dent, has enough nourishment to supply a plant until its leaves appear and the plant begins to make its own food.
3. While the potatoes produce flowers above the ground, they are storing food, the part of the plant that we eat, in underground tubers. Students should count the number of potatoes that each plant produced. What was the average number of potatoes per plant? Discuss the significant role of potatoes in the Irish diet in the 19th century.
4. Potatoes supply the seed (the *eyes)* to grow potatoes, so farmers always kept some potatoes for seed. Explain that a blight destroyed the potato crops of Ireland in the 1800s, causing famine. During the famine in Ireland some people had to eat their seed potatoes or go hungry.
5. Next, students will see whether potatoes planted in different soils grow at different rates. Students should plant potatoes in three bowls half-filled with three different soil types: sand, half sand/half potting soil, and potting soil. They will observe the plants carefully each day and record the growth of each plant. What changes do they notice? Do potatoes sprout in all three kinds of soil? Do they grow at the same rate?
6. Students might vary their experiment by adding fertilizer to one bowl. Irish farmers used manure or seaweed for their potato beds. What do they notice about plants with soil enriched by fertilizer?
7. Last, students will experiment with varying the heat and the moisture of the plant environments.

TEACHER REFLECTION Students in a classroom in Brooklyn, New York, conducted potato-growing experiments while they read Marita Conlon-McKenna's novel *Under the Hawthorn Tree.*

The 4-H Publication *The Humble Potato: Underground Gold* is recommended. It is designed for New York's 4-H clubs. It includes the history of the potato, potato-growing experiments and other potato activities. (See Additional Readings in this activity.)

The Best Potatoes Are Those Grown at Home

By Celeste Hadrick
STAFF WRITER

GROWING YOUR OWN potatoes on Long Island may seem unnecessary, almost like cultivating dandelions or raising Canada Geese.

The potato, after all, is still a top crop on Long Island, even though the vast potato fields that once ranged from shore to shore have dwindled over the years.

But there are good reasons for growing your own:

"It gives me great pleasure to be able to give my family and my children and my grandchildren food that hasn't been sprayed with insecticide," said Andrew Binder of Huntington, who began experimenting with spuds 10 years ago in his community garden plot and has become somewhat of a home-grown expert on their cultivation.

As for Ingrid Rost of West Bay Shore, who has been planting potatoes for seven years: "I believe they taste better. And it's the fun of doing it yourself. My grandchildren like to come and harvest them, to dig in the dirt."

The first thing a beginner should know is that potatoes are tubers, enlarged roots which grow under the soil beneath bushy green plants that like sun.

There are many kinds of potatoes but Binder favors three varieties: the yellow-fleshed Yukon Gold, the early, red-skinned Norland and the white-fleshed, dependable Superior. This year, Rost planted the yellow-fleshed, buttery tasting Carole, the mid-season, red-skinned Cherry Red, and Katahdin, a white, mid- to late-season variety.

For Long Island gardeners, Joseph Sieczka, coordinator of the Long Island Horticultural Research and Extension Center in Riverhead, recommends Bake-King, a white, main-season baking potato, and Chieftain, a large early red-skinned potato in addition to Katahdin, Norland and Superior.

Potatoes are grown from "seed potatoes" that growers have certified as disease free. Seed potatoes the size of golf balls are planted whole while larger spuds can be cut so that each piece has at least one eye, or preferably two.

Binder warns against planting potatoes from the grocery store because they may have been sprayed with chemicals to prevent sprouting and could carry disease.

Like many potato gardeners, Binder allows the cut potato to dry overnight to prevent rot. Sometimes he dips the pieces in wood ashes to seal in the wetness. But, Sieczka said, allowing potatoes to dry could damage the cut surface while using ashes could allow disease organisms to penetrate.

As long as the soil is warm — about 55 to 60 degrees — and moist, not wet, "the best thing to do is cut the potatoes, put them in the ground and let them grow," Sieczka said.

Sieczka said April is the best time to plant potatoes on Long Island, though Binder generally waits until mid-May because the early green potato shoots can be damaged by frost. Potatoes should be in the ground no later than mid-June for harvesting in the fall.

Binder plants in rows. He makes a furrow 3 to 6 inches deep, plants his potatoes about a foot from each other and covers them with just an inch or two of soil. Then he waits for the sprouts.

The key to potato growing is hilling the spuds, Binder said. When the green sprouts are a few inches high, draw dirt from the side of the row and pile it onto the stems.

"Do this a couple of times as it grows. That's the most important part of growing your own potatoes. The more soil you pile around the potato plant, the more potatoes you will get."

Rost learned her method for cultivating spuds when an aunt from Germany, a former farmer, visited during potato-planting time.

Wearing a cobbler's apron filled with potatoes around her waist, Rost's aunt bent over, dug a hole about 3 inches deep, popped in a potato, dug a second hole a foot away and used the dirt from the second hole to fill in the first. Down the row she went, lickety split.

"It was so fast, and they came out wonderful. That's how I plant my potatoes," Rost said.

Rost doesn't hill the potatoes; instead, she puts a thin layer of grass clippings on them. Grass clippings, straw or compost can be used to hill potatoes as long as the growing spuds are covered. Potatoes exposed to the sun turn green and are not edible.

Binder thinks the best part of growing potatoes comes when the plants blossom.

"You can feel down and find small potatoes. These are the new potatoes and they're nothing like what you find in the store. They're sweet and they have a taste of their own. You can only get those new potatoes from your own plant."

Neither Binder nor Rost have had problems with such diseases as blight. And Sieczka warns gardeners to be on the lookout for the scab organism, which causes surface blemishes and leads to dehydration after the potatoes are stored. Norland, Superior and Carole are resistant to scab.

But the popular Yukon Gold is susceptible to scab. Remember to keep plants moist even during the hottest part of the summer to ward off problems, Sieczka said.

Like many other vegetables, potatoes should be rotated rather than planted in the same place each year. Rost finds this reduces damage from wire worms, which eat holes in the potatoes.

Both Rost and Binder have had problems with the yellow-and-black-striped Colorado potato beetle, which can defoliate a plant if left unchecked. Both prefer to pick off the beetles by hand rather than spray with chemicals.

When the potato plant foliage browns and dies, it's time to harvest. Binder uses a shovel, starting at one end of the row and working down. Rost uses a spading fork if the soil isn't dry enough, to dig them out by hand. Both admit they end up cutting or spearing a few potatoes here and there.

"And those get cooked immediately," Rost said. ■

Newsday Photo / J. Michael Dombroski

Ingrid Rost buries seed potatoes in her backyard garden in West Bay Shore.

THE POTTING SHED

When Watering, Give a Good Soak

A soaker hose gets water right to the roots.

WHETHER IT COMES from the heavens above or a hand-held hose, your garden needs an inch to an inch-and-a-half of water each week. If you garden on the sandy South Shore, it may require up to two inches. What's best is a slow, steady seeping. That's why a soaker hose is the way to go. Unlike a sprinkler that merely spritzes your plants, a soaker hose gets the water to where it's needed — down to the roots. The water sweats through tiny pores in the hose and goes right into the soil. Not only will the plant develop strong, deep-growing roots, but the foliage is less likely to come down with fungal diseases brought on by wet leaves. Connectors allow you to snake a series of soaker hoses around the plants and shrubs in your beds and borders. You can hide the hoses with a top layer of mulch. It's a good idea to install a timer so you don't forget to turn off the water. The soaker hose shown above is a Fiskars Moisture Master, which should delight recyclers. It's made from used tires.

— Virag

Newsday Garden Book

NEWSDAY'S garden editor is the author of "Gardening on Long Island With Irene Virag." The 200-page keepsake book is available for $19.95, plus shipping, handling and tax. For more information, please call 800-400-4112. ■

Source: Celeste Hadrick. "The Best Potatoes Are Those Grown At Home," *Newsday*, (May 11, 2000), B25. ©2000 *Newsday, Inc*. Reprinted with permission.

Name:_____

GROWING A POTATO

Plant #_____

DATE	PLANT ACTIVITY

PLANT #_____ NUMBER OF TUBERS (POTATOES)_____

TOTAL PLANTS_____ **TOTAL POTATOES_____**
AVERAGE # OF POTATOES PER PLANT_____

GROWING A POTATO
page 2

DATE	ACTIVITY BOWL 1	ACTIVITY BOWL 2	ACTIVITY BOWL 3

(AFTER FERTILIZER)

DATE			

(AFTER CHANGES IN HEAT & MOISTURE)

DATE	WET	MOIST	DRY

DATE	LIGHT	SHADE	DARK

Source: Robert W. Woods. "How to Sprout a Potato," *Science for Kids: 39 Easy Plant Biology Experiments*. Blue Ridge, PA: TAB, 1991, pp. 87-89.

The Amazing Potato

BACKGROUND

Potatoes were brought from the Americas to Europe by Spanish explorers around 1570; by 1573, there was a mention of potatoes as food fed to patients in a hospital in Seville. How the potato arrived in Ireland is still a matter of speculation.

One legend is that Sir Walter Raleigh grew potatoes at his Irish home near Youghal, Co. Waterford in the 1590s; however, that story, like another that claims it was Sir Francis Drake who introduced the potato to Europe, is just a story. What we do know is that the potato was cultivated in Co. Wicklow in the 1640s (Zuckerman 19).

Potatoes became a staple crop for the Irish because they could grow them is a moist, mild climate and could produce substantial crops even on small plots of poor land. They were easy to grow and only required a spade. Women, men, and children could cultivate crops of potatoes in ridges called *lazy beds*.

By the nineteenth century, the potato was the staple food for many Irish and they ate a lot of them: 14 pounds a day for the working man. Since a medium-sized potato has only 100 calories, no fat, almost no salt, and provides a rich supply of vitamins and minerals, the potato is an amazing source of nutrition:

50% of the USRDA of Vitamin C
20% Vitamin B6
15% iodine
10% niacin (B complex vitamin), iron and copper
8% folic acid (B vitamin), phosphorus, magnesium and thiamin (vitamin B1)
4% zinc and pantothenic acid (B vitamin)
2% riboflavin (vitamin B2).

Over the years people have regarded the potato as a charm against disease and capable of amazing cures. Some thought potatoes could protect against rheumatism and sciatica and cure burns, frostbite, sore throats, and warts.

The Spanish introduced sweet potatoes from Haiti and the Caribbean Islands as well as the ordinary South American potato to Europe. England's Henry VIII was said to have regarded sweet potatoes as a *love potion* (or aphrodisiac) and considered them to be very valuable.

RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL READINGS

"Potato," in *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend. II.* Maria Leach, ed. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1950. pp. 822

Salaman, Redcliffe N. *The History and Social Influence of the Potato.* rev. ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985.

Eames-Sheavly, Marcia and Tracy Farrell. *The Humble Potato: Underground Gold.* Ithaca: Cornell University, 1995. (Available from Media Services Resources Center, 7 BTP, Ithaca, NY 14850).

Zuckerman, Larry. *The Potato: How the Humble Spud Rescued the Western World.* Boston: Faber and Faber, 1998.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Use skills as graphic artists, actors, musicians and writers to create 30-second radio or television commercials to promote New York State potatoes.

Relate the history and migration of the potato and its importance as a staple crop in two areas of the world.

Trace the history of the potato on a map of the world.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 3: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the earth's surface.

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding

Arts 1: Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (Music and Theatre)

Arts 2: Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles. (Music and Theatre)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Produce oral and written reports on topics related to school subjects.

Read aloud with expression, conveying the meaning and mood of a work.

Know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, foods, and religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures and civilizations.

Map information about people, places, and environments.

Compose simple pieces that reflect a knowledge of melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, timbrel, and dynamic elements.

Know and use a variety of sources for developing and conveying ideas, images, themes, symbols, and events in their creation of art.

During the creative process, reflect on the effectiveness of selected mediums or techniques to convey intended meanings.

Use traditional or nontraditional sound sources, including electronic ones, in composing and performing simple pieces.

Demonstrate appropriate listening and other participatory responses to music of a variety of genres and cultures.

Visit theatre technology facilities, including the local high school facility, and interact with professionals and theatre students to learn about theatre technology (e.g., lighting, staging, sound, etc.).

Know about local theatrical institutions, attend performances in school and in the community, and demonstrate appropriate audience behavior.

Take advantage of community opportunities and cultural institutions to learn from professional artists, look at original art, and increase their understanding of art.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- consult and interpret databases
- identify premises

. participate in group activities

. present information

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

English Language Arts

Music

Science

Languages Other then English

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to find the Andes Mountains on a map of South America. In which countries of South America do students find the Andes? How high are the mountains? What kinds of vegetation grow at such heights? Those Adean highlands (altiplano) were home to native Americans who found that one of the few things that grew under harsh, high mountain conditions were potatoes. The potatoes were amazing for their hardiness. Some agricultural scientists estimate that potatoes grew along the coast of Chile some 13,000 years ago and traveled upland to the mountains (Zuckerman 4).

   The Andean people may have been cultivating the potato back as far as 7,000 years ago. We know how they cultivated the potato: by terracing their land and using canals for irrigation (Eames-Sheavly 4). They also developed ways to store their potatoes safely through the bitterly cold winter. The potato was the staple crop of the Inca Empire.

2. Today potatoes are grown commercially in every state of the United States and in many places around the world. It is a multi-billion dollar a year crop. Ask students to create radio or television commercials promoting New York State potatoes. The commercials should be 30 seconds long. Working in groups, students should be responsible for doing research on New York State potatoes and for creating a slogan, music or a jingle and the commercial "story." If they are TV commercials, students are responsible for set, costumes, props and graphics.

   Students can present, record, or videotape their commercials and share them with the class. If the students do a potato feast for family and friends or another class, the commercials can be the entertainment.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Write a page describing how you learned more about the importance of the potato by doing the radio/TV project.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Teachers may want to do this activity with *How to Grow Potatoes* and *A Diet of Potatoes: Is it a Healthy Diet?* As a field activity, students presented different episodes of the history of the potato, and made a potato feast of colcannon in their classroom using electric mini-stoves and a toaster oven. Students enjoyed working together, following the directions in a recipe, and making calculations about the amount to make to serve the class and their guests from the local day care center.

The Cornell Cooperative Extension publication, Marcia Eames Sheavly and Tracy Farrell's *The Humble Potato: Underground Gold,* explores the potato from scientific and social perspectives and has a number of activities for students.

A Diet of Potatoes: Is it a Healthy Diet?

BACKGROUND

In this activity, students will learn about the nutritional value of a diet of potatoes.

In the first four decades of the 1800s, the Irish population grew rapidly and there was a demand for land. Poorer people moved to poorer land, but even poor land could support the potato. It grew everywhere; it was easy to cultivate, and it had a high yield per plant. While the Irish diet did include milk and milk products, oatmeal and fish, generally herring, the Irish relied mainly on the potato.

They ate enormous amounts of potatoes. In the course of their three meals per day, adult males consumed 12 to 14 pounds of potatoes per day! Women and children over the age of 10 ate about 11 pounds of potatoes each day; younger children ate about five pounds of potatoes per day. If there were milk, or butter or cabbage or fish, the people would mix them into the potatoes, but boiled potatoes were the main source of food.

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *The Amazing Potato, How to Grow Potatoes,* and *Preparing a Potato Feast.*

The Potato's Nutritional Value

A potato is extremely nutritious. The percentage of nutrients according to the USRDA are as follows in a five-ounce potato:

Protein	6
Vitamin C	35
Thiamin	4
Riboflavin	2
Niacin	10
Iron	10
Vitamin B6	20
Folacin	8
Phosphorus	8
Magnesium	8
Zinc	4
Copper	10
Iodine	15

Vitamin C levels vary, but new potatoes supply more than half of the United States Recommended Daily Allowances (USRDA). Trace elements: manganese, chromium, selenium, molybdenum. Low sodium: 10 milligrams. 20 percent of USRDA potassium.

A five ounce potato has:

- 100 calories
- 3 grams protein
- 2 grams of carbohydrates
- 0 fat

See the activity *The Amazing Potato* for more information about the nutritional value of potatoes.

RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Bourgeois, P. *The Amazing Potato Book: Two Dozen Fun Projects for Home or School*. New York: Addison-Wesley, 1991.

Eames-Sheavly, Marcia and Farrell, Tracy. *The Humble Potato: Underground Gold.* Ithaca: Media Services, Cornell University, 1995 includes further information about the potato and activities that focus on the potato in history (Inca Empire, Andean Highlands c. 1300; Co. Galway 1846) and today (Long Island 1996). It offers sources for ordering potato seed pieces, recipes, references and resources.

Meltzer, M. *The Amazing Potato: A Story which the Incas, Conquistadors, Marie Antoinette, Thomas Jefferson, Wars, Famines, Immigrants and French Fries All Play a Part*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

14 pounds of potatoes—or a bag of potatoes per small group

Chart of fast food nutritional values (available at McDonald's, Burger King, etc.)

Scale for weighing potatoes

Jar of peanut butter, boxes of cereal, microwave popcorn, Spaghetti-O's, soup, bagels, tortillas, bread, cookies, soda, bag of lunch meat, and other foods that students eat that are *not* made of potatoes

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the nutritional value of a potato.

Describe the importance of the potato in the Irish diet in the early 1800s.

Compare the potato diet with current foods, including fast food, eaten by people in the United States.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 3: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth's surface.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Study about different world cultures and civilizations focusing on their accomplishments, contributions, values, beliefs and traditions.

Know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, foods, and religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures and civilizations.

Study about how people live, work, and utilize natural resources.

Compare the physical, human, and cultural characteristics of different regions and people.

Investigate how people depend on and modify the physical environment.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- observe and conclude
- probe ideas and assumptions
- reflective thinking
- think rationally about content
- interpret information and data
- utilize multiple resources in research

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Health

Family and Consumer Sciences

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to contemplate their daily diet. Do they normally have time for breakfast?

   What did they have for breakfast today? Did they skip breakfast? Was it the same as yesterday?

   What do they like to eat for lunch? What are their choices when they buy or bring their lunch?

   Who decides what they will have to eat?

2. Describe the Irish diet in the early 1800s, asking students to weigh out 14 pounds of potatoes. How many potatoes make up the 14 pounds? In 11 pounds? In five pounds? If adult males consumed 12-14 pounds of potatoes a day, how many potatoes is that?
3. When Irish people say they have eaten 14 pounds of potatoes, they say they've eaten a *stone* of potatoes. A stone is a unit of weight used in Ireland and England to measure a human or animal. Ask students to weigh objects in the room using *stones* as a measurement.
4. Some people might think a diet of potatoes would be unhealthy. It might have been boring, but it is an extremely healthy diet, probably better than the typical American diet with its sugar and high fat content. A five-ounce potato contains 100 calories, 3 grams of protein, 23 grams of carbohydrates, and 0 grams of fat. Ask students to compare the nutritional content of a five-ounce potato with five ounces of food that they eat every day, such as cereal, soup, peanut butter, and the other items listed under classroom materials in this activity.
5. Demonstrate to students how to set up a chart comparing the nutritional value of a diet of potatoes and the typical fast food diet (calories, grams of fat, carbohydrates).

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Write one paragraph on the question: Are potatoes a healthy diet?

Chart the nutritional value of the foods of a typical day of an Irish child in 1830 as compared to an American student today.

TEACHER REFLECTION

As students are investigating the diet of potatoes in Ireland, they should also be contemplating the role diet plays in health, family life, survival, work life, and other aspects of daily living.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

For younger students:

Discuss the daily diet of most American children, identifying healthy, nutritional food sources.

For advanced students:

After students have had the opportunity to identify the nutritional value of an Irish diet of potatoes, ask them to reflect upon how a sudden blight of the primary food source could lead to mass starvation. Students can research the source of the blight, the governmental response to sudden food loss, or the survival strategies utilized by starving families.

Students may wish to explore the relationship between hunger and emotion in music and dance.

Preparing a Potato Feast

BACKGROUND

In America fresh potatoes come in four basic types:

Russets (also called *Idahoes*, for their place of origin) are elongated cylinders with, as you might guess, a russet-colored, reddish-brown skin. They are on the mealy side and make excellent potatoes for French-frying.

Long whites are even longer cylinders with a tan, smooth skin. They are firm and good for all-around home use: boiling, frying, mashing and roasting.

Round whites are also good all-purpose potatoes. Buff-colored and very smooth, they are firm and good boiled, steamed, home-fried, mashed and roasted.

Round reds are reddish on the outside, firm and white within. They are best for boiling, steaming and roasting.

Other potatoes are *new potatoes:* young, small potatoes of any variety and *late potatoes:* drier with a corky skin.

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *The Amazing Potato, How to Grow Potatoes,* and *A Diet of Potatoes: Is it a Healthy Diet?*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Traditional Foods of Ireland

How to Cook Potatoes

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Brody, Jane. "Please Pass the Potatoes," *Jane Brody's Good Food Book.* New York: Bantam Books, 1987.

Eames-Sheavly, Marica and Tracy Farrell, "Appendix B: Potato Recipes," *The Humble Potato: Underground Gold.* Ithaca: Media Services at Cornell University.

FitzGibbon, Theodora. *A Taste of Ireland. Irish Traditional Food.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Background information on board

Potato samples of potatoes listed in the background section

Potato recipes from cookbooks (preferably dishes students would not know)

Cooking supplies and ingredients (pots with lids, hot plates, etc.)

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Explain how different types of potatoes are used.

Describe the role of potatoes in pre-famine Ireland.

Follow recipe directions and create a potato dish.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

ELA 1: The student will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

MST 7: Students will apply the knowledge of mathematics and science to address real-life problems and make informed decisions.

HPEFCS 2: Students will understand and be able to manage their personal and community resources.

Arts 1: Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (Visual Arts)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Know the social and economic characteristics, such as foods, that distinguish different cultures and civilizations.

Devise ways of making observations to test proposed explanations.

Prepare a potato dish.

Develop their own ideas and images through the exploration and creation of art works based on themes, symbols, and events

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- draw conclusions
- ask and answer logical questions
- participate in interpersonal and group activities
- make decisions about process

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

Mathematics

Health

Family and Consumer Sciences

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Describe different types of potatoes, showing students samples. Explain that in pre-Famine Ireland, potatoes were boiled in a large iron pot suspended on a long hook or supported on its three legs over an open fire. If you could only prepare your potatoes in this way and with nothing added, which of the four types of American potatoes would you choose to eat?
2. Read the directions for boiling and steaming potatoes in *How to Cook Potatoes* and boil or steam four different types of potatoes. When preparing potatoes, why is it important to eat the skins or peel away as little as possible? How can you keep peeled potatoes from changing color? Why is it important to have a tight-fitting lid when steaming or boiling potatoes?
3. Ask students to name all of the potato dishes they can think of and list them on the board. List additional dishes found in cookbooks. Ask students what they would consider if they were to conduct a blind taste test. What criteria would they evaluate? Taste, certainly. What else? Consistency? Make a chart of potato

criteria and rank each potato type. When Irish people praise certain kinds of their potatoes, they say that they are *floury*. What do you think they mean by floury? (Floury means flour-like, powdery.) Are any of the American potatoes floury?

4. Working in groups, prepare a potato dish for a class potato feast. Use the adaptations of traditional recipes provided in the handouts or find potato recipes of their own to make for the class feast.
5. Make a class cookbook of potato recipes. Have students create illustrations for the cookbook.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Devise a chart that will reflect a personal taste test of a potato feast. Be prepared to summarize the results based on the data recorded on the chart.

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity was field tested by middle school students who made colcannon which they served to local day care children who had come for an afternoon of songs and stories. There was enough colcannon for everyone by using two electric hot plates and a toaster oven. If it is difficult to cook in class, students can work at home and bring in food to share. In one school, class members brought in enough homemade potato chips, stuffed potatoes, potato au gratin, Potatoes O'Brien, french fries, and potato skins for everyone.

Traditional Foods of Ireland

Irish Potato Soup

Ingredients:

2 lb. potatoes (6 medium potatoes)
1 tbs. butter
6 cups skim milk or a mixture of whole milk and water
chopped chives or parsley
2 medium sized onions or leeks
1 cup light cream
6 strips bacon, crisply fried and crumbled (optional)
salt and pepper to taste

Steps:

1) Peel and slice potatoes. Peel and slice onions.
2) Melt butter in a saucepan. Add the onions (or leeks) and cook gently until soft.
3) Add potatoes and season to taste. Stir.
4) Add milk or milk water mixture. Cover the saucepan. Cook over low heat one hour.
5) Prepare bacon.
6) Puree potato-onion mix in a blender. Add cream and reheat.
7) Serve sprinkled with chopped chives or parsley and bacon.

Boxty Pancakes

Boxty pancakes are a traditional Irish potato dish served on the eve of All Saints' Day, Halloween. Boxty also can be baked as a kind of potato bread.

Ingredients:

1 cup raw potatoes
1 cup mashed potatoes
2 cups plain flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
large knob of butter, melted
1/2 cup of milk

Steps:

1) Peel and grate potatoes. Drain liquid. Separate fluid from starch. Mix starch with grated and mashed potatoes.
2) Mix grated potatoes, mashed potatoes, flour, salt, melted butter or margarine, baking powder, and milk to make a thick batter that will still pour.
3) Lightly oil a frying pan. Spoon mixture on the pan. Cook both sides over a moderate heat.
4) Serve with butter or sprinkled with sugar.

Colcannon (Potato and Cabbage Casserole)

Ingredients:

1 lb. potatoes (3 medium potatoes)
4 cups water
1 lb. green cabbage (1/2 medium head)
1 large onion
1/4 cup skim milk
1 tbs. butter or margarine
salt and pepper to taste

Steps:

1) Boil potatoes in lightly salted water for 40 minutes until they are very tender but not mushy. Drain the potatoes and save the cooking liquid. Set the potatoes aside to cool.
2) Shred the cabbage. Chop onion.
3) Use the potato water (add more water if necessary to cover the vegetables) to boil the cabbage and onion for about 10 minutes until softened. Drain the vegetables and set them aside.
4) When the potatoes are cool enough to handle, peel off the skin, place the potatoes in a bowl, add the milk and margarine, and mash them until they are smooth.
5) Add the boiled cabbage, onion and salt and pepper to the potato mixture. Mix.
6) Transfer to a greased baking dish. Before serving, heat in a moderately hot oven (15 minutes at 350 degrees).

Potato Cakes

Ingredients:

1-2 cups mashed potatoes
2 cups flour
2 tbs. butter or margarine
1 tsp. baking powder
2 tsp. salt
1/4 cup milk
caraway seeds (optional)

Steps:

1) Mix butter, flour and salt.
2) Add mashed potatoes and enough milk to make a soft dough.
3) Roll out on a floured board. Cut into rounds about 3 inches across. Sprinkle a few caraway seeds on top of each cake.
4) Place on an oiled baking sheet. Bake at 450 degrees for 20-30 minutes.
5) Makes nine cakes. Eat them hot, split across the middle and spread with butter.

Champ

Ingredients:

1-2 lbs. potatoes (4 or 5 medium potatoes)
10 scallions or 2 leeks
2 cups of milk
salt and pepper to taste
4 tbs. melted butter

Steps:

1) Boil potatoes. Peel and mash.
2) Chop scallions or leeks. Cook in the milk until soft. Drain, but save the milk.
3) Add scallions or leeks and salt and pepper to the mashed potatoes. Beat well.
4) Add enough milk to make the dish creamy and smooth.
5) Put mixture into a deep warmed dish. Make a well in the center. Pour hot melted butter into the center.

Source: Theodora Fitzgibbon. *A Taste of Ireland: Irish Traditional Food*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969.

How to Cook Potatoes

Clean the potatoes in water by rubbing the skin with a vegetable brush, sponge, or dish cloth. To peel the potatoes, use a vegetable parer and take off the thinnest possible layer of potato skin. This preserves the potato's vitamin and mineral content. One-third of the potato's nutrients are just beneath the skin. The less peeling you do before cooking, the less nutrients you lose. If you eat the skins, you get a fiber bonus as well.

Peeled potatoes darken if you let them stand around uncooked. Soaking them in water slows the darkening, but it also will result in a loss of nutrients. To keep potatoes from discoloring without sacrificing their food value, toss them with some lemon juice dissolved in a little water. Still better, do not peel or cut them until just before you are ready to cook them. Best of all, do not peel them at all.

Yields of Potatoes

1 pound of potatoes (three medium potatoes) makes any of the following:
3 cups of sliced potatoes
2 1/2 cups of diced potatoes
2 cups of mashed potatoes
2 cups of French fries
3 servings of potato salad

Steaming: This is one of the best ways to preserve a potato's food value because few nutrients are lost during the cooking. Use a steamer pot (a spaghetti cooker will work as well as one designed for steaming vegetables or Chinese food) or an inexpensive steamer rack that fits into a saucepan. Improvise a potato steamer by inserting custard cups or balls of crumpled foil on the bottom of a saucepan and placing the potatoes on these little platforms. The pot's lid should fit tightly. Put water at the bottom of the pan and bring it to a boil. Add the potatoes and cover the pot. Steam the potatoes until they are tender when pierced with a fork. Depending on their size, whole potatoes usually take 30 to 45 minutes to steam. Cut potatoes take 20 to 30 minutes to steam. If the pot lid does not fit tightly, check once or twice to make sure the water has not cooked out.

Boiling: Put about one inch of water (if desired, add 1/8 teaspoon of salt) in a saucepan with a thick bottom. Place the potatoes in the saucepan and cover with tight-fitting lid. Cook the potatoes until they are fork-tender—about 30 to 40 minutes if they are whole and 20 to 25 minutes if they are cut up. If the lid is not tight, check to be sure the water does not boil out. If you are planning to bake bread or make soup in the near future, save the cooking water in the refrigerator and use it in your recipe. That way you will retrieve any nutrients that are cooked out of the potatoes. Potatoes also can be peeled, cut, and boiled directly in a soup or casserole.

Baking: Potatoes do not require a specific oven temperature for cooking. This makes it possible to bake them at the same time you bake or roast other foods. At 400 degrees, medium-sized potatoes will bake in about 40 to 45 minutes. The lower the temperature, the longer the potatoes take to bake through. You can speed the baking by using *potato nails* (aluminum nails inserted lengthwise through the center of the potato) or standing the potatoes on the spikes of a multi-potato baker. If you are not using nails or spikes, it is a good idea to pierce the potato skin a few times before baking. This allows steam to escape and keeps the potato from bursting. Do not wrap the potato in foil unless you want a steamed flavor. It also takes longer to bake a foil-wrapped potato. Potatoes can be baked directly on the oven rack, on a cookie sheet, or in a stove-top potato baker. Test the potato for doneness by gently squeezing it (be sure to protect your hand with a pot holder) or piercing it with a skewer or fork.

Microwaving: This is the ideal method for the busy or hungry cook who cannot wait 45 minutes to bake a potato. It has become very popular with single folks and working parents. A favorite late supper is a microwave baked potato topped with yogurt and chives. It can be ready in five minutes. Wash and dry the potato, and prick it with a fork. Place it on a double layer of paper toweling in the center of the microwave. For cooking more than one potato, arrange them as if each potato were the spoke of a wheel radiating from the center of the microwave floor. A 6-ounce potato will usually take about 4 minutes, with 1 to 2 minutes extra for each additional potato. Be sure to turn the potato over halfway through this process. **Warning:** Do not put metal or foil into a microwave oven.

Roasting: If prepared along with roasted meat, chicken, or turkey, arrange peeled, cut-up potatoes around the edges of the pan about 12 hours before you expect the meat or bird to be done. To roast potatoes by themselves, boil or steam them first for about 10 minutes, peel them, and then arrange them in a shallow pan. They will have a better flavor if you brush them with a small amount of melted butter, melted margarine, or vegetable oil. Roast whole potatoes at 400 degrees for about 45 minutes.

French-Frying*:* Slice potatoes into 1/4 inch strips. Heat oil to about 375 to 400 degrees. Fry potatoes in small batches to keep the oil temperatures from dropping drastically. Use a deep fryer or heavy saucepan with about 4 inches of vegetable oil. Frying is easiest if you can put the potatoes into a basket that fits into the pot. Otherwise, use a slotted spoon or small strainer to remove the potato strips from the oil. The potatoes will take about five minutes to cook through. Be sure to drain off the excess oil by placing the cooked potatoes on paper towels. You can keep the first batches warm in a 300-degree oven while the rest are cooking.

Source: Jane Brody. "Please Pass the Potatoes," *Jane Brody's Good Food Book*. New York: Bantam Books, 1987.
Reprinted by permission of W.W. Norton and Company.

Traditional Songs About the Irish Potato

BACKGROUND

Potatoes were the main diet of the Irish in the 19th century, (see the activities *A Diet of Potatoes: Is it a Healthy Diet?* and *The Amazing Potato*), and its abundance was celebrated in traditional Irish song. One song, *The Potato*, repeats the common, but unsubstantiated, belief that the Englishman Sir Walter Raleigh planted the first potatoes in Ireland while he was Mayor of Youghal, Co. Waterford in 1588-89. This was about the time when the British began their conquest of Ireland by introducing colonies of *planters*, or English settlers in Ireland.

"The Potato" celebrates the abundance of the potato harvest and the many kinds of potatoes that grow in Ireland. In contrast, "The Famine Song" is a song about the small blighted potatoes the Irish ate, if they could find them, when the crop failed in 1845, 1846, 1848, and 1849. They call the potatoes *praties* because the Irish (Gaelic) word for potatoes is *prátaí* [PRAW-tee].

During the famine, starving Irish were given Indian corn from America, normally given to geese. But geese could digest raw corn. The Irish did not know how to prepare corn, got very sick from it, and some died. These experiences of the Irish are often reflected in traditional Irish music.

Teachers may also want to refer to the activities *The Amazing Potato, Ballads: Writing the Emigrant's Experience,* and *Music of the Great Irish Famine.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Potato

The Famine Song

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Galvin, Patrick. *Irish Songs of Resistance*. NY: Oak, 1962.

O'Canainn, Tomás, *Traditional Music in Ireland*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

O'Lochlainn, Colm. *More Irish Street Ballads*. Dublin: The Three Candles, 1965.

O'Riada, Seán. *Our Musical Heritage*. Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1982.

O'Sullivan, Donal. *Irish Folk Music and Song*. Dublin: Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland, 1961.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

If possible, demonstrate the use of flute, violin, hand drums, or even spoons as musical accompaniment.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Understand the meaning of the two traditional Irish songs.

Compare the tone and message of the two songs.

Describe how Irish history was reflected in song.

Explain the integration of literature, song, and dance to develop appreciation of how to convey stories.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELA 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

ELA 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

Arts 1: Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (Dance and Music)

Arts 3: Respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought. (Dance and Music)

Arts 4: Develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society. (Music)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Explore narrative accounts of important events from world history to learn about different accounts of the past to begin to understand how interpretations and perspectives develop.

Know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, foods, and religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures and civilizations.

Interpret and analyze documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history.

View historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music and artifacts.

Explain the literal meaning of a historical passage or primary source document, identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, what events led up to these developments, and what consequences or outcomes followed.

Understand the literary elements of setting, character, plot, theme, and point of view and compare those features to other works and to their own lives.

Read aloud with expression, conveying the meaning and mood of a work.

Dance a range of forms from free improvisation to structured choreography.

Sing songs and play instruments, maintaining tone quality, pitch, rhythm, tempo, and dynamics; perform the music expressively; and sing or play simple repeated patterns (ostinatos) with familiar songs, rounds, partner songs, and harmonizing parts.

Express to others their understanding of specific dance performances, using appropriate language to describe what they have seen and heard.

Describe the music's context in terms related to its social and psychological functions and settings (e.g., roles of participants, effects of music, uses of music with other events or objects, etc.)

Identify the primary cultural, geographical, and historical settings for the music they listen to and perform.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

. observe and conclude
. reflective thinking

- inquire, question, probe
- draw conclusions
- think rationally about content
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- interpret information and data
- reflect upon content/form opinions

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

Arts

MULTIPLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- visit dance studio

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Review the vocabulary used in the songs, reviewing the meaning of each line.
2. Introduce students to the rhythm of the song *The Potato* by clapping the rhythm and speaking the verse in unison. Introduce the tune and practice singing the song in unison.

   The Potato is sung to a dance tune called a hornpipe. It is a lively song that praises different kinds of Irish potatoes, with names like Royal Standards, Queens, Royal Kings, and Aran Banners. Ask students:

   Why would a song about potatoes be written?

   What does the song say about the potato?

   What word or lines speak to the abundance of the potato?

   The tone of the song changes in the last verse. What does it ask?

   Can the Irish be certain that the potato crop will always be sufficient?

   What happens if it is not?
3. *The Famine Song* is another traditional Irish song about the potato. Does it talk about the potato in the same way as the song *The Potato*? Ask students to compare the two songs. Ask students:

   How does the music of *The Famine Song* make you feel?

   Does the music correspond with the words of the song?

   Does the song say anything about the future?

   How should one sing a song like this?
4. With assistance from a guest instructor or physical education teacher, teach students the hornpipe dance, accompanying the dancing with spoons.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Write a description of how the message of the two songs depict life in Ireland in the 19th century.

TEACHER REFLECTION

The songs in this activity do not have to be taught by the teacher, but can be taught as poems to be read aloud. Students can integrate dance, music, and history as they analyze a piece of literature.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

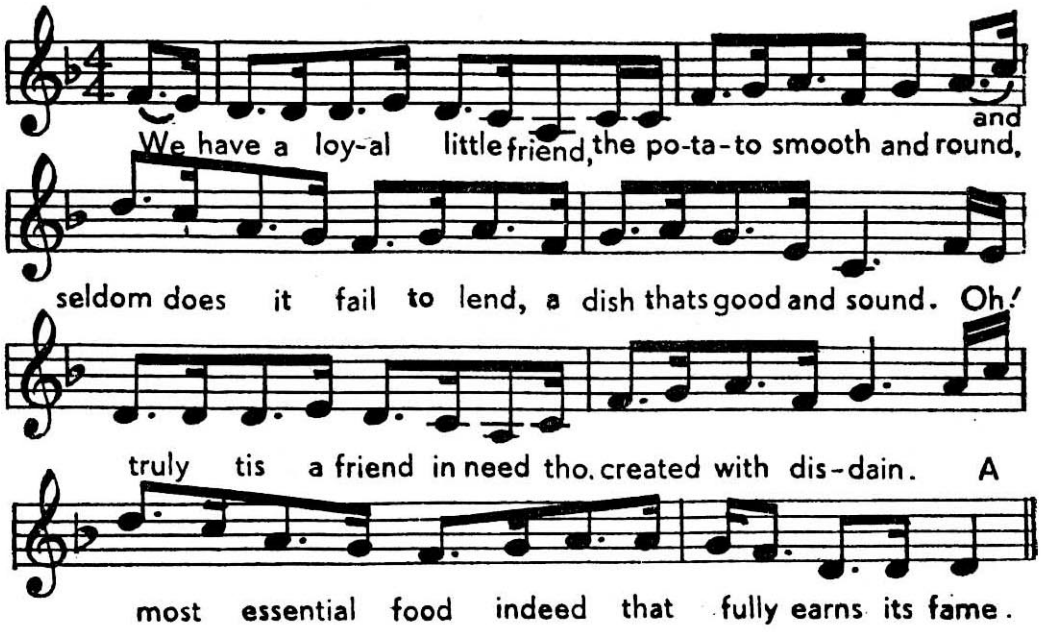
For advanced students:

Ask students to create a poem or story that depicts the importance of the potato in Irish history. If possible, students can set the poem to music.

Students may want to choreograph *The Famine Song.*

Students may want to use Irish (or other) traditional music to tell their own stories.

THE POTATO



[Third line read 'treated'

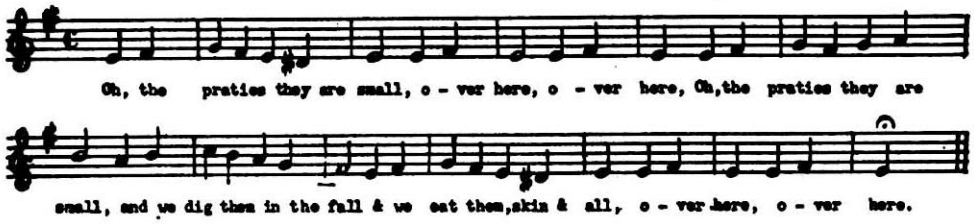
They say Sir Walter Raleigh
(So it's generally agreed)
Implanted in our valleys fair
The first prolific seed.
There sprang from out the fertile soil
(At least that's what we're told)
With eager care and earnest toil
A crop a hundred-fold.

Oh ! they've got Royal Standards now
They've Queens with gracious manners
And Royal Kings, the least highbrow
Who mix with Arran Banners.
But there's many a fine variety
That claim no regal fame
Just as good society
As those that flaunt the name.

Please God today, let come what may
Our farmers will plant more
Of these tubers which are bound to stay
Stark hunger from our shore.
So let us call them what we may
Be it Spuds or Pomme-de-terre
They are a vital food today
In which we all must share.

Source: Colm O'Lochlainn, **More Irish Sheet Ballads**.
Dublin: The Three Candles, 1965. pp. 160-161.

THE FAMINE SONG



Oh, the praties they are small, over here, over here,
Oh the praties they are small and we dig them in the Fall
And we eat them skin and all, over here, over here.

Oh, we wish that we were geese, night and morn, night and morn,
Oh, we wish that we were geese and could live our lives in peace
Till the hour of our release, eating corn, eating corn.

Oh, we're down into the dust, over here, over here,
Oh, we're down into the dust, but the Lord in whom we trust
Will repay us crumb for crust, over here, over here.

Source: Patrick Glavin. *Irish Songs of Resistance*. New York: Oak Publications, 1962. pp. 44.

The Home Life of the Irish

BACKGROUND

In many cultures, people socialize around the dining room table or the kitchen table. Irish family life in the 1800s was centered on the hearth (fireplace) rather than around the table. The fireplace provided the heat for the house; potatoes were boiled in the large iron pot that hung over the fire. The family sat around the fire at night talking and telling stories. Guests were honored with the invitation to sit close to the fire. ("Sit in to the fire.") It was considered very bad luck to let the fire go out, and when a family moved, family members carried some of the old fire to the new hearth.

One of Ireland's favorite proverbs is "Níl aon tinteán mar do thinteán féin." [Neel ane tinTAWN mar doe hinTAWN fane, "There is no fireside like your own fireside."]

Teachers also may want to refer to the activities *Pre-Famine Housing Conditions in Ireland* and *Travelers in Pre-Famine Ireland.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Irish Hearth

A Potato Dinner, at Cahirciveen

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Danaher, Kevin. *In Ireland Long Ago.* Cork: Mercier, 1991.

Ireland's Vernacular Architecture. Cork: Mercier, 1975.

Kissane, Noel. "Food and Diet," *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History*. Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Photographs of interiors of homes

Boxes and materials for designing cottage models

Books depicting Irish homes in the nineteenth century (optional)

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe how homes are designed around resources such as heat, light and water.

Explain why Irish home life in the nineteenth century was centered around the hearth.

Compare Irish homes to their own.

Construct model cottages.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 3: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national and global—including the distribution of people, places and environments over the Earth's surface.

Arts 1: Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (Visual Arts)

HPEFCS 2: Students will understand and be able to manage their personal and community resources.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Analyze evidence critically and demonstrate an understanding of how circumstances of time and place influence perspective.

Explore the lifestyles, beliefs, traditions, rules and laws, and social/cultural needs and wants of people during different periods in history and in different parts of the world.

Study about how people live, work, and utilize natural resources.

Draw maps and diagrams that serve as representations of places, physical features, and objects.

Investigate how people depend on and modify the physical environment.

Investigate why people and places are located where they are located and what patterns can be perceived in these locations.

Describe the relationships between people and environments and connections between people and places.

Know and use a variety of sources for developing and conveying ideas, images, themes, symbols, and events in their creation of art,

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- evaluate and connect evidence
- observe and conclude
- think rationally about content
- present information
- interpret information and data
- consult and interpret primary sources
- identify patterns and themes

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

PATTERNS TO ORGANIZE INFORMATION

Identify resources that influence the design of homes around the world.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Using the handout *The Irish Hearth*, ask students:

This is the hearth of a more prosperous Irish farmer.

–What do you notice at the fireplace? What does the fire provide for Irish families?

–The pot in the center is the *potato pot*. Describe why you think it looks the way it does in the picture.

–What other furnishings are in the house? How were they used?

–Most houses had a couple of three-legged stools, and there were stone seats on either side of the fireplace. How would students arrange the furniture for an evening of talk?

2. You might be surprised to see a pig in an Irish house in the nineteenth century. The pig was a very valuable part of the Irish cottage economy and pigs do best in warm, dry surroundings. Where there were no barns or

pig sties, pigs were kept in the house. They provided meat for the household; however, in poor households, people did not eat their pig. They sold the pig to get money to pay the rent on their land. That is why the pig was often called *the gentleman who pays the rent.* People sometimes made fun of the Irish with *their pig in the parlor*, but it was often the income from the pig that made the difference between a good and a bad or hungry year for the Irish poor.

Discuss with students:

Where does your family eat its meals?

Where do members of your family spend their leisure time?

Do you have pets or domestic animals which are part of your household? Where are they housed?

Draw a diagram or floor plan of your house indicating where people eat and socialize.

Ask students:

Illustrate or make a model of an Irish cottage interior. Show how members of the household might have spent an evening. Write a description of life in their cottage and how family life differed from family life at the homes of the students.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

How is the design of housing affected by environment and home life?

Diagram a typical Irish home, with explanations.

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity is an opportunity for students to talk about family social customs and to think about the differences between Irish rural families where three generations shared a household, where everyone occupied the same social space and where families amused themselves with talk, songs and storytelling. How does that social pattern compare with the family life of the students?

Students should be encouraged to share family stories of social patterns in their families: earlier generations, life in the *old country*. What have families around the world gained or lost in the changes in our patterns of socializing? (For example, do Americans congregate around the fireplace and in the kitchen—or at McDonald's?)

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

Using the handout depicting the Irish hearth and the engraving from *The Pictorial Times* (February 28, 1846) titled *A Potato Dinner at Cahirciveen,* [CAH-HER-SIV-VEEN] Co. Kerry (Kissane 17, NLI), ask students to consider:

What do you notice about the way people live?

How do they eat their meals?

How do you think they prepare their meals of potatoes?

How do they eat their potatoes?

What kind of furniture is in the house?

What provides light and heat?

Then ask students to compare the housing of other countries around the world in the nineteenth century, determining the reasons why families set up houses the way that they did. For example, weather, terrain, heating sources, social life, etc., can determine the layout of houses.

The Irish Hearth

Engraving of girl standing by fire. Cottage interior, Co. Leitrim.

Source: Anna and Samuel Hall. *Ireland: Its Scenery and Character III*. London: Hall, 1841. pp. 297.

'A potato dinner', at Cahirciveen, Co. Kerry. (**The Pictorial Times**, 28 Feb. 1846; courtesy of NLS.)

Source: Noel Kissane, The Irish Famine, A Documentary History. Dublin: national Library of ireland, 1995, p.17.

Used with permission of the author and the National Library of Ireland.

Dance in Ireland: The Walls of Limerick

BACKGROUND

In this activity, students will explore the role of dance in Ireland. Dancing at the village green or at the crossroad, the place where two roads come together, continues to be a popular pastime in the Irish countryside. People walk to the crossroads and someone provides the music (a flute, a tin whistle, an accordion or a violin). Sometimes a person will "lilt," singing a cheerful tune to accompany the dance.

Teachers may want to refer to the activity *Dance as Communication.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Children Dancing at the Crossroads

Dancing on the Pier, Clogherhead, [CLO-her Head] Co. Louth

The Walls of Limerick

The Kerry Dance

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Breathnach, Brendan. "Irish Dancing," in Victor Meally, et al., eds. *Encyclopedia of Ireland.* Dublin: Hodges and Figgis, 1968. pp. 398-399.

Friel, Brian. *Brian Friel. Essays, Diaries, Interviews, 1964-1999.* ed. Christopher Murray. London: Faber and Faber, 1999.

Gladstone, Valerie. "Dancing of Familiar Ground," *Newsday.* (March 5, 2000), D 18.

O'Sullivan, Donal. *Irish Folk Music and Song.* Dublin: Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland, 1961.

Paddy Reilly's Ireland Vol. One. Harmac HM11CD1.

Westley. Kevin B. *Westley School of Irish Dancing: Céile, Country and 2 Hand Dance Instruction Book.* New York: The Westley School of Irish Dance, 1992.

Video: *Irish Dance*. 2 cassettes. Color. 60 min. Survey Irish traditional dancing around the world.

Stagestep VHS V# 544.

Video *Dancing at Lughnasa.*

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the similarities and differences between two graphic representations of dancing in rural Ireland.

Describe the role that dance played in Irish rural culture before and after the Great Irish Famine.

Demonstrate the steps to the "Walls of Limerick" dance.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

Arts 1: Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts

(dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (Dance and Music)

Arts 2: Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles. (Dance and Music)

Arts 3: Students will respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought. (Dance and Music)

Arts 4: Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society. (Dance and Music)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Explore the lifestyles, beliefs, traditions, rules and laws, and social/cultural needs and wants of people during different periods in history and in different parts of the world.

Dance a range of forms from free improvisation to structured choreography.

Demonstrate knowledge of sources for understanding dance technologies: live, print, video, computer, etc.

Demonstrate knowledge of how human structure and function affect movement in parts of dances and dances that they know or have choreographed.

Demonstrate appropriate listening and other participatory responses to music of a variety of genres and cultures.

Demonstrate knowledge of choreographic principles and processes.

Express to others their understanding of specific dance performances, including perceptions, descriptions, analysis, interpretations, and evaluations.

Use appropriate terms to reflect a working knowledge of social-musical functions and uses (appropriate choices of music for common ceremonies and other events.

Show how specific dance forms are related to the culture from which they come.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- observe and conclude
- reflective thinking
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- participate in group activities
- identify patterns and themes

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

Music

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to look at Trevor Fowler's painting *Children Dancing at the Crossroads* which was painted in the 1830s, and describe the dancers. What is each dancer doing? Are they doing the same thing? Is the girl's part of the dance the same as the boy's? What differences do students notice? Do they look happy, serious, sad? What are the other figures in the painting doing? Who is providing the music in the painting? What kind of sound does the instrument make?
2. Write the following verses from the song *Is Clogherhead Like it Used To Be* on the board:

   Is Clogherhead like it used to be?

   Is the pier still there?

Do the boys and girls go round the head?

In the evening so fair?

Is my girl as nice as she used to be?

Are My friends all right?

Or what I'd give to be with them in Clogherhead tonight.

Discuss how the words tie to the handout *Dancing on the Pier, Clogherhead, Co. Louth*.

Now ask students to look at the photograph of people dancing on the pier in Co. Louth around 1935. (The caption on top, written in Irish, (nach i seo aimsir phleisiútha Knock-ee-show-an-amsher-play-shure-a) reads "Isn't this a pleasant time!") How does it compare with Fowler's painting? What is the same about the dancing? What do students notice is different about the dancing? Are the parts the same for men and women? Is it a slow dance or a fast dance? How can students tell how fast the dancers are moving? What kind of music is being provided for the dancers? The dancers are doing a kind of dance called a "set dance." Set dances were done inside the kitchen of a farmhouse so that dancers move in a small space, feet close to the ground but stamping loudly. Sometimes the top half of a Dutch door was used as a temporary floor for tapping out dance steps. Does it look like fun?

3. The Walls of Limerick is a long dance done in reel time. It is somewhat like our Virginia Reel insofar as it is a lively dance by couples and involves executing a series of figure eight patterns. Start practice for the Walls of Limerick by teaching students the Sidestep and the Round the House. When students have learned the basic steps, follow directions for the Walls of Limerick.
4. James Lyman Molloy (1837-1909) wrote a song called *The Kerry Dance*. Have students sing the song or study the lyrics as they listen to the song. Who is the singer of the song? Where is he or she? Is the singer young or old? Does the singer still live in the glen where young people gathered to dance on summer nights? What did the Kerry Dance mean to the dancer then? What does the Kerry Dance mean to the singer now? What is the mood of the singer?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

In studying the painting on the handout *Children Dancing at the Crossroads* and the photograph on the handout *Dancing on the Pier, Clogherhead, Co. Louth*, what can you conclude about the role of dance in Irish life? On what basis did you draw your conclusions?

TEACHER REFLECTION

Students are probably most familiar with Irish dance as it has been presented by the Riverdance Company. Its success has produced spinoffs like Lord of the Dance, Feet of Flame and Dancing on Dangerous Ground. Students will recognize that one of the elements in a Riverdance routine is that the ensemble dances the steps which are customarily danced by individuals. How does the step dancing differ from a long dance like The Walls of Limerick?

Doing this lesson with students during field tests was an occasion to discuss the importance of dance as a way of communicating. Students watched the dance sequence in Brian Friel's *Dancing at Lughnasa* [LOO-na-sa] and considered it in terms of Friel's comment about the sisters' spontaneous dance. "Carried aloft by the beauty and frenzy of the dance, theatre-goers also share a moment of ecstasy." At the end of the play/film, the narrator refers to the dance again saying, "Dancing as if language has surrendered to movement—as if this ritual, this wordless ceremony, was now the way to speak, to whisper private and sacred things" (Friel, 140).

The magazine *Hornpipe* is devoted to Irish dance, music, and culture in North America. It is a resource for those interested in classes, dance, and cultural events.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

For beginning and advanced learners:

Perform the dance (or dances) as part of a school or community play or festival of Irish culture, at a St. Patrick's Day party or at an American Wake. (See the activity titled *The American Wake.*)

Advanced students, particularly dance students, may enjoy analyzing the dance sequences in the movie (video) *Dancing at Lughnasa*.

Children Dancing at Crossroads

Source: Trevor Fowler, **Children Dancing at Crossroads**. National Gallery of Ireland.
Used with permission of the National Gallery of Ireland.

Dancing at Vlogherhead, Co. Louth. c. 1935

Source: Department of Irish Foklore, University College, Dublin.
Used with permission of the Department of Irish Foklore.

Walls of Limerick

This is a progressive long dance done in reel time. One couple facing another couple with the gent on the lady's left hand side. Right foot directly in front of the left foot with your weight on your left foot. Holding inside hands, the dance starts as follows:

Dancer	Step	# of Bars
A) All	Advance & Retire -twice.	8
B1) Ladies	Sidestep (7's) to the Left diagonally across the set.	2
2) "	Turn into the other lady's place (3's).	2
3) Gents	Sidestep (7's) to the Right diagonally across the set.	2
4) "	Turn into the other gent's place (3's).	2
C1) All	Sidestep (7's & 3's) away from your partner holding opposite person's right hand in your right hand.	4
2) "	Sidestep (7's & 3's) Home.	4
D) All	Round the House & face new couple.	8

Repeat A through D until the music stops. Stand with the Right foot (R) directly in front of the Left foot (L). Your weight is on the Left foot. The Advance and Retire is done as follows:

A) In one quick motion, bring the Right foot back (try to "kick your backside") and forward. "kick your backside") and forward. Then, with the Right foot directly in front of the Left foot, dance R-L-R counting 1-2-3. **1**

B) In one quick motion, bring the Left foot back (try to "kick your backside) and forward. Then, with the Left foot directly in front of the Right foot, dance L-R-L counting 2-2-3. **1**

C) With the Left foot directly in front of the right foot, dance R-L-R counting 3-2-3. **1**

D) In one quick motion, bring the Left foot directly behind the Right foot and dance L-R-L counting 4-2-3. **1**

Repeat A through D counting 5-2-3, 6-2-3, 7-2-3 and 8-2-3. **4**

Round The House or House

Face your partner, lady gives crossed hands (palms down) and gent gives uncrossed hands (palms up) with the elbows bent sharply upward. Gent puts the weight on the Right foot (R) while lady puts the weight on the Left foot (L). Giving only the gent's instruction, the lady moves in the opposite direction and uses the opposite foot. Round the House is done as follows:

Turn forward (L)-2(R)-3(L) **1**
Turn backward (R) 2(L)-3(R) **1**

As you turn in clockwise motion, you should also move one position around the set in an anti-clockwise direction.

Repeat these steps three times (6 bars) and God willing you should end up back where you started. This step can also be done with the gent starting with his Right foot.

Sidestep or Slipside (7's & 3's) to the Left and Home

Stand with the right foot (R) directly in front of the Left foot (L). Your weight is on the Left foot. The Sidestep is done as follows:

Sidestep or Slipside to the Left The 7's

A) Bring the right foot directly in behind the Left foot.Moving to the left, dance R-L-R-L-R-L-R counting 1-2-3-4-5-6-7. During this movement the Right. **2**

The 3's

B1) In one quick motion, bring the Left foot directly behind the Right foot and dance L-R-L counting 1-2-3. **1**

2) In one quick motion, bring the Right foot directly behind the Left foot and dance R-L-R counting 2-2-3. **1**

Bring the Left foot directly behind the right foot. Moving to the right, dance L-R-L-R-L-R-L counting 1-2-3-4-5-6-7. During this movement the Left foot is always behind the Right foot. **2**

The 3's

1) In one quick motion, bring the Right foot directly behind the Left foot and dance R-L-R counting 1-2-3. **1**

2) In one quick motion, bring the Left foot directly behind the Right foot and dance L-R-L counting 2-2-3. **1**

Note: Always dance in front when you Sidestep to the Left and behind when you Sidestep to the Right.

Sidestep or Slipside (7's & 3's) Clockwise & Home

Same as sidestep (7's & 3's) to the Left and Home, except it is done in a circular motion clockwise. Usually holdinghands with at least one other couple.

Right and Home

Stand with the Right foot (R) directly in front of the Left foot (L). Your weight is on both feet. The sidestep is done as follows:

Sidestep or Slipside to the Right The 7's

A) Keeping the Right foot directly in front of the Left foot, jump up (landing with most of your weight on the Left foot). Dance L-R-L-R-L-R-L counting1-2-3-4-5-6-7, moving to the right. During this movement the Left foot is always behind the Right. **2**

The 3's

B1) In one quick motion, bring the Right foot directly behind the Left foot and dance R-L-R counting 1-2-3. **1**

2) In one quick motion, bring the Left foot directly behind the Right foot and dance L-R-L counting 2-2-3. **1**

Sidestep or Slipside Home The 7's

C) Bring the Right foot directly behind the Left foot. Moving to the left, dance R-L-R-L-R-L-R counting 1-2-3-4-5-6-7. During this movement the Right foot is always behind the Left foot. **2**

The 3's

D1) In one quick motion, bring the Left foot directly behind the Right foot and dance L-R-L counting 1-2-3. **1**

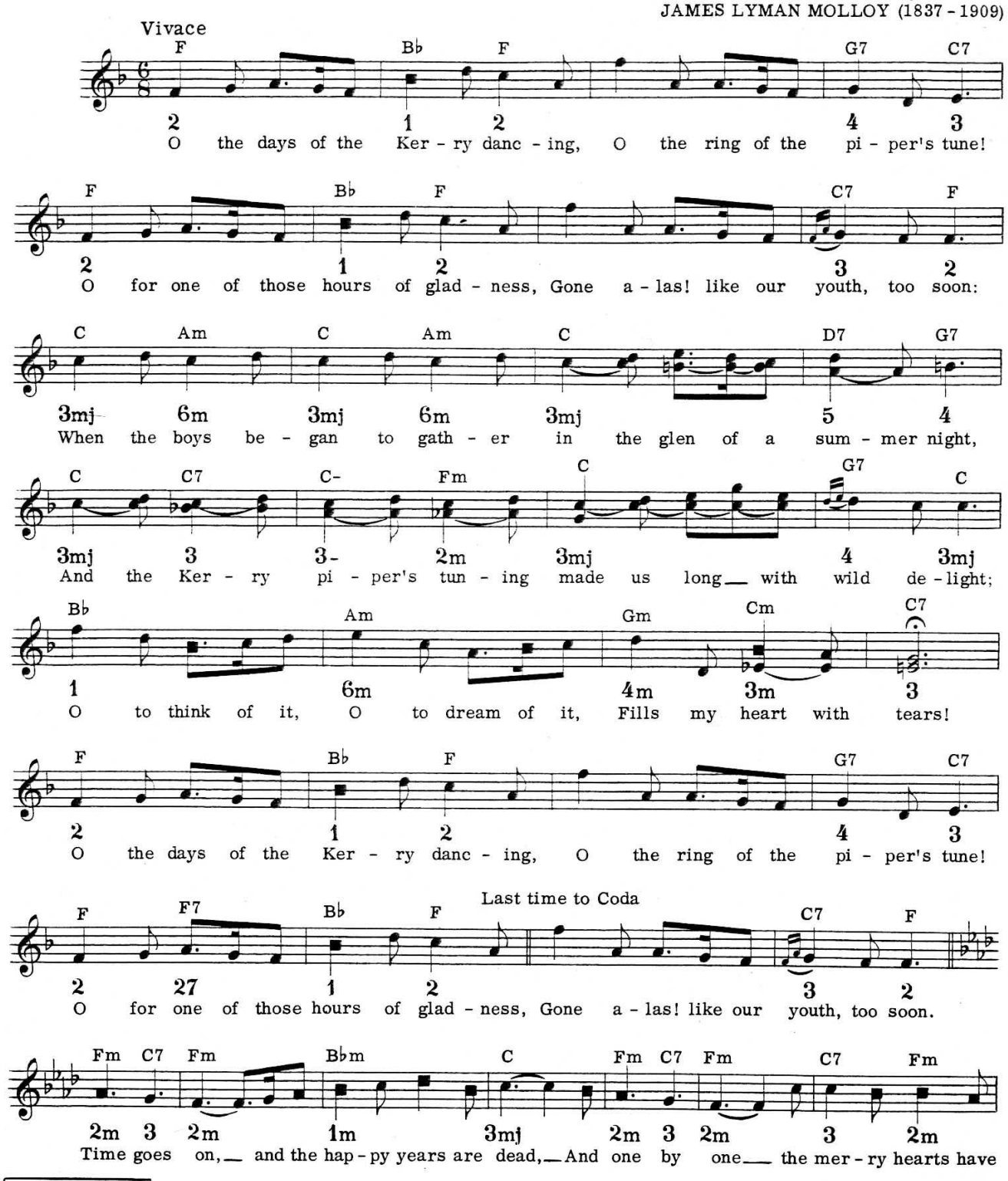
2) In one quick motion, bring the Right foot directly behind the Left foot and dance R-L-R counting 2-2-3. **1**

Note: Always dance behind when you Sidestep to the Right and in front when you Sidestep to the Left.

Source: Kevin B. Westley.
Westley School of Irish Dancing: Ceile, Country and 2 Hand Dance Instruction Book.
New York: The Westley School of Irish Dance, 1992.
Permission Pending.

The Kerry Dance

Words and Music by
JAMES LYMAN MOLLOY (1837 - 1909)



FLAT
Square Notes

2 = F
1 = B♭ 3 = C7

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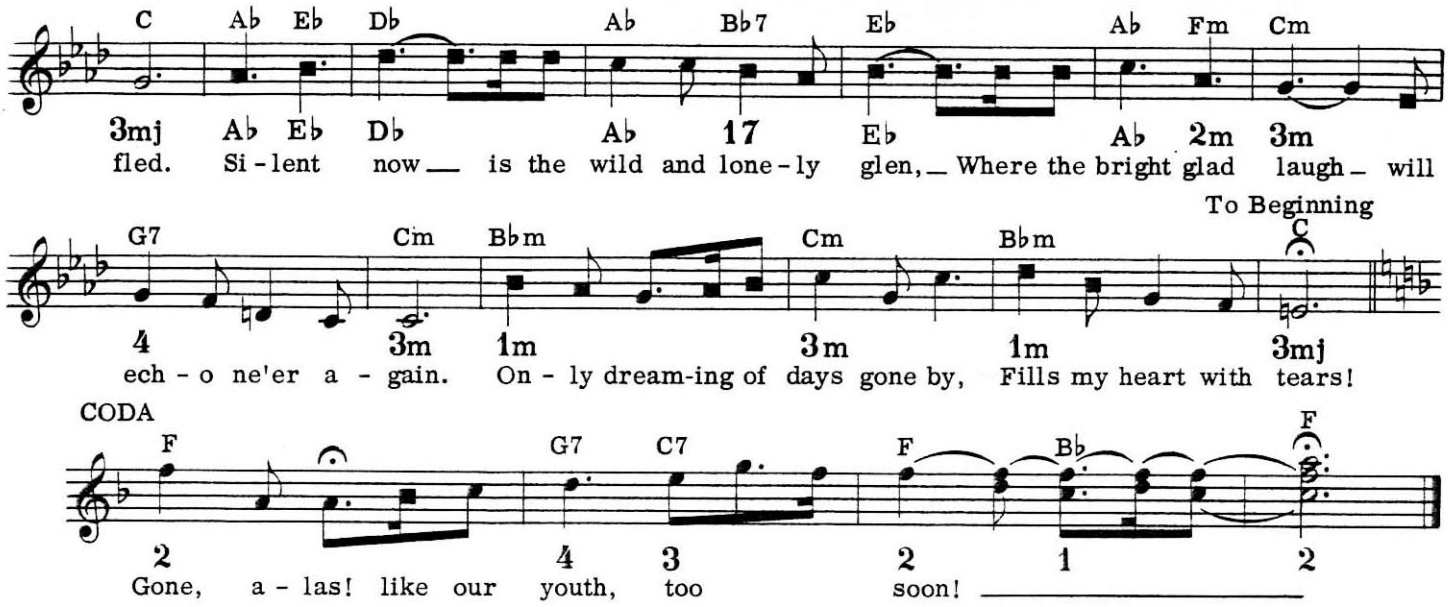


Source: Elmer Ihrke andJ.M. Hanert, **Irish All Time Hits for Hammond Chord Organ**.
New York: M. Witmark, 1960, pp. 20-21.
Permission pending.

Making a St. Brigid's Cross

BACKGROUND

It is important for student to realize that Ireland's families, even if they were poor farmers, had an active, vibrant culture full of music, art and dance. The Great Irish Famine may have had a profound impact on family life, but many cultural traditions managed to survive.

Rural Ireland follows the old Irish calendar with an orientation built around the seasons, not the months. Ireland has the same seasons as the United States, but they fall earlier in the year. Seasons begin on the first days of February, May, August, and November. Each season brings changes in weather and with it a change in rural life. Each rural activity requires good luck as well as skill, so celebrations of the seasons always have an element that was practiced for good luck.

The old name for the first day of February (the first day of spring) was *Inbolc* [In-bollick]. In later times, it was called the feast of St. Brigid or St. Brigit; it was a feast taken over from an earlier Celtic Brigid who was associated with fire and fertility. (The Christian saint is much tamer; she is a gentle creature often described as a serving girl.)

The central tradition associated with the feast of St. Brigid is the making of St. Brigid's crosses, or *crois Bhríde* [CRUSH VREED-ah]. These are straw crosses made out of rushes by the daughters of the household to hang in houses and byres (barns) as a token of good luck. They are customarily placed above the door of the house on St. Brigid's eve and left there until the following Brigid's eve when they are replaced or joined by a new St. Brigid's cross. The *croise Bhríde* comes in different shapes and sizes but the usual one has four arms and a woven center. (Ireland's Radio Telefís Éireann, the national television station, used this *crois Bhríde* as its logo.)

In this activity students will make a St. Brigid's cross.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

St. Brigid's Crosses and Charms

Traditional Irish Craft Projects

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Danaher, Kevin. *The Year in Ireland*. Dublin: Mercier, 1972.

Evans, E. Estyn. *Irish Folk Ways*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957.

O'Sullivan, John. *St. Brigid's Day.* Dublin: National Museum of Ireland, n.d.

Shaw-Smith, David. ed. *Ireland's Traditional Crafts.* London: Thames and Hudson, 1984.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Straw or reeds, sharp scissors, rubber bands, bag ties or jute twine, wire cutter.

(If straw is gathered from a field, remove the grain heads, cut off pieces between the joints. Slip off the husk and cut pieces to uniform lengths. Straw is also available at craft shops. Thistle twine made of paper can be substituted for the straw or reeds. It does not have to be soaked and it is easier for younger children to work with than straw.)

Soak the straw in warm water overnight to make it more pliable.

Cut straw or reed into twelve 12" long pieces.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Make St. Brigid's crosses and other traditional straw crafts.

Describe how the traditional St. Brigid's cross functioned in Irish rural culture.

Describe calendar customs in rural Ireland and the part the St. Brigid's cross played in traditional observances.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

Arts 1: Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts and participate in various roles in the arts. (Visual Arts)

Arts 4: Students will develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society. (Visual Arts)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Study about different world cultures and civilizations focusing on their accomplishments, contributions, values, beliefs, and traditions.

View history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments in world history by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents.

Produce a collection of art works, in a variety of mediums, based on a range of individual and collective experiences.

Use the elements and principles of art to communicate specific meanings to others in their art work.

Demonstrate how art works and artifacts from diverse world cultures reflect aspects of those cultures.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- reflective thinking
- conceptualize and observe
- follow directions

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Help students follow the directions for making St. Brigid's cross.

Divide the straw into four bunches of three pieces.

Using a pencil, bend the first bunch of straw around the pencil and fasten the ends together with a rubber band.

Bend the second bunch around the pencil and fasten with a rubber band.

Weave the three straws through the first bunch at a right angle.

Fasten with a rubber band.

Bend the third bunch around the pencil.

Weave the three straws through the second bunch at a right angle.

Attach the ends with a rubber band.

Bend the last bunch around the pencil.

Weave the three straws through the bunch at right angles.

Attach the ends with a rubber band.

Pull on each bunch to tighten the cross.

Use jute string to tie the ends of each bunch and cut away the rubber bands.

Loop a piece of string through one of the bunches to create a hanger.

2. In some places there were processions of children or young people going from house to house carrying a straw Brigid's doll. Students may want to try making a Brigid's doll by taking five straws and cutting them so that they are at least 12" long. Soak the straws overnight so they are pliable. Students can bend the softened straw around their finger and tie both legs with bag ties, wire or jute twine. Leave a gap of about 1/4 inches. The loop will form the head of the doll. To make the doll's arms, bind two 8" pieces of straw at the ends with bag ties or wire. Slip the arms through the straw body below the head and attach with bag ties or wire. To make the skirt, fan out the straw legs. Loop wire or a 6" piece of straw around and between the straw strands so they remain in a fanned-out position.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

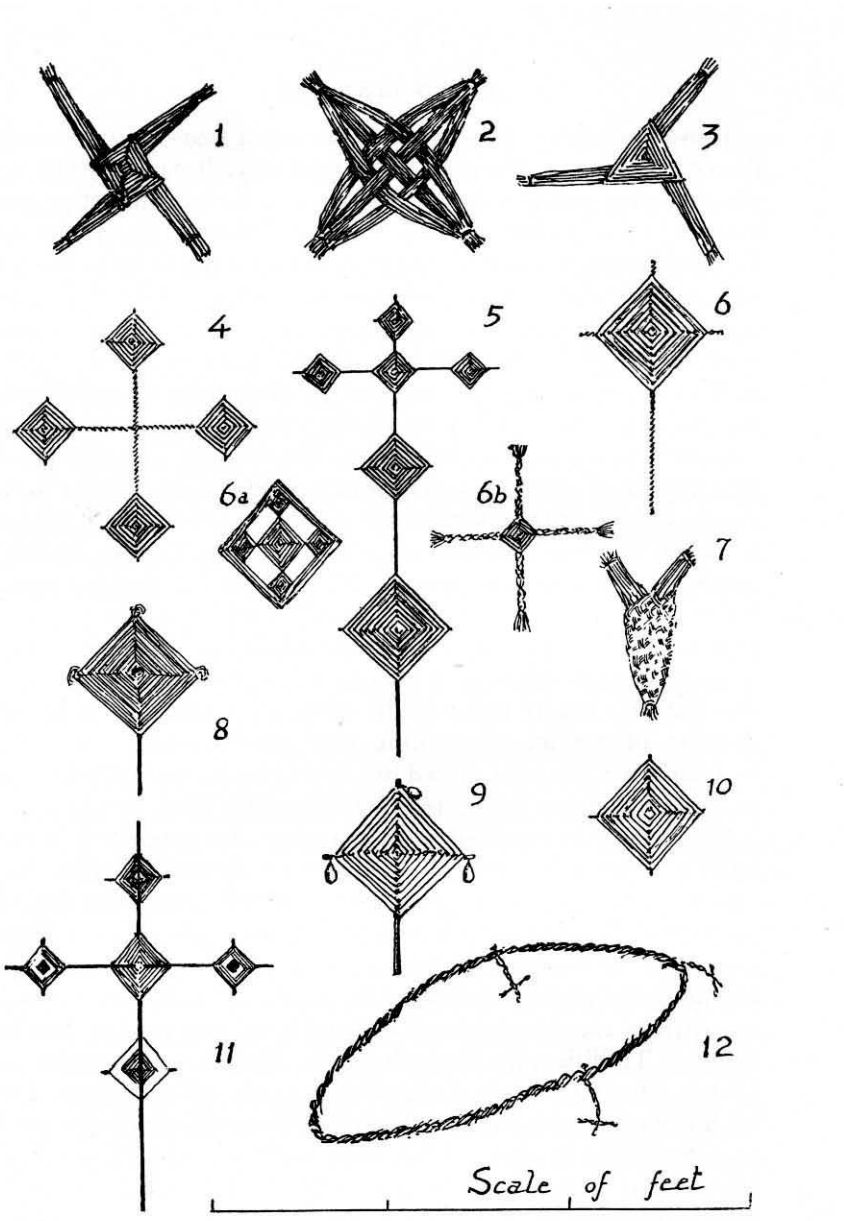
What can the crafts of a culture tell us about that culture? Give another example of a craft that reflects a culture.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Ireland's shipbuilding and linen industries of the country's northeast experienced the industrial revolution, but it bypassed rural Ireland until the twentieth century. For that reason, and because Ireland has a long history of skilled craftsmanship, many traditional crafts survive today. In this activity, students act as art historians and anthropologists as they examine and create traditional crafts to understand Irish rural culture.

This is an opportunity for a general discussion about the importance of symbols to a culture.

For additional suggestions, see the handout *Traditional Irish Craft Products.*



Source: E. Estyn Evans, **Irish Folk Ways**. New York: The Devin Adair Company, 1957. Fig. 85. p.269. Permission pending.

Traditional Irish Craft Projects

Wool Dyeing

For centuries, dyes have been extracted from the roots, stems, leaves, berries and flowers of various plants. Lichen is the oldest and most popular material for dye. It is a plant composed of fungus and algae that grows on rocks and trees. Often it was a child's job to go out after the rain to collect lichen for dyeing. Vegetable substances commonly used in homespun dyeing include:

Onion skins can be used to dye wool brown
Indigo or black berries for blue or blue-black
Heather for Yellow
Madder for red

Dyeing was traditionally a woman's task. It was considered unlucky for a male to be present while the dye pot was being used. According to a popular legend, 6th century St. Ciaran of Clonmacnoise put a curse on the dye pot because his mother ordered him to leave the room while she completed her tasks.

Crios Weaving (Aran Islands)

On the Aran Islands in Co. Galway, weavers make multicolored woolen belt sashes. Seven or eight pieces of wool thread are stretched between two chairs or stools. It is customary to have two white threads on the outside and five or six different colors in between. A wool belt for a man is usually 3 1/2 yards long, for a woman it is 2 yards long. After the crios is woven, each end is finished with three plaits or braids. Because the belts are so long, they are wrapped around your waist more than once.

Bodhran

Irish musicians play a wood and skin frame drum called the Bodhran [BOW-rawn] that originated in ancient times. The frame is usually made from beechwood and the skins are either goat or deer.

The skins are attached to the frame using glue and brass upholstery nails. Wooden crosspieces are attached to the inside of the frame to keep it from losing its shape. Musicians hold one hand between the crosspieces and the skin and beat the other side of the skin and the wooden frame with a wooden beater.

Materials:
36" x 2" x 1/16" piece of balsa wood
36" x 2" x 1/4" piece of balsa wood
wax paper, staples, thumb tacks, scissor, serrated knife or craft saw, unsharpened pencil

Soak the 1/16" piece of balsa wood in hot water until it bends easily (Between two and three hours). Gradually bend the balsa wood until it forms a circle. Overlap the ends by about 4 inches. Staple the ends together. This will make a circle with a diameter of approximately 10 inches.

Measure in place a piece of the 1/4" balsa wood equal to the diameter of the circle (approximately 10"). Cut with the serrated knife or hobby saw. From the center of the wood, use the serrated knife or hobby saw to remove a 1/4" wide, 1 inch deep piece of wood. Use thumbtacks to anchor the support piece to the frame.

Measure in place a 2nd piece of the 1/4" balsa wood equal to the diameter of the circle (approximately 10"). Cut with the serrated knife or hobby saw. Line it up so it crosses the other support piece at right angles. Mark off where crosses the other support. Use the serrated knife or hobby saw to remove a 1/4" wide, 1 inch deep piece from the wood. Slide it over the other support and see thumb tacks to anchor the crosspiece to the frame.

Roll out a sheet of wax paper four inches longer than the diameter of the circle. Center the circular frame on the wax paper. Pull tight and staple the wax paper to the circular frame. Staple around the entire circular frame.

Use the eraser end of unsharpened pencil as the beater.

Straw Crafts

Traditionally, the most common type of roof on an Irish farmhouse was a thatched roof made of straw. Because of the damp climate, the roofs must be regularly maintained. The most popular types of straw to use for thatching comes from wheat, rye, flax, or oat plants. It ideally should be gathered from fields after the plants are fully ripened but before they are cut down, or it should be taken from a field of grain that has been cut but not threshed by combine. It is impor-

tant not to break the straw. Sometimes rushes, reeds and tough grasses are substituted for straw, depending on local conditions. Straw is also used to make baskets, brooms, chair seats, braided belts, religious ornaments, and children's toys.

In Ireland, straw dolls and ornaments are associated with the celebration of St. Brigid's day in February. Children make St. Brigid's Crosses (Cros Bride) to hang for good luck, St. Brigid dolls, and braided straw belts (Crios Bride).

If straw has been harvested from a field, remove grain heads from the straw. Cut off pieces between the joints. Slip the husk off and trim pieces to uniform lengths. Straw is also available at craft shops. Soak the straw in warm water overnight to make it softer and flexible.

Materials:

Straw or reeds, sharp scissors, needles, thread, lightweight craftwire, garbage bag ties, or jut twine, pieces of yarn for trim, wire cutter, long-nosed pliers (Thistle–twine made of paper–can be substituted for the straw or reeds. It is easier to work with for younger children and does not have to be soaked.)

Crois Bhríde (St. Brigid's Cross)

Cut twelve 12" long pieces of straw or reed. Soak overnight to soften.

Make bunches of 3 pieces. Bend the first bunch around a pencil and hold the ends with a rubber band. Bend the next bunch around a pencil. Weave the three straws through the first bunch at a right angle. Attach the ends with a rubber band. Bend the final bunch around a pencil. Weave the three straws through he third bunch at a right angle. Attach the ends with a rubber band. Bend the final bunch around a pencil. Weave the three straws through the third bunch at a right angle. Attach the ends with a rubber band.

Pull on each bunch to tighten the weave. Use jute string to tie the end of each bunch and cut away the rubber bands. Loop a piece of string through one of the bunches to make a hanger.

Straw Dolls

For the body, cut 5 straws that are at least 12 inches long. Soak overnight to soften.

Bend the softened straws around your finger and bind both "legs" with wire or jute twine, leaving a gap of about 1/2". The loop forms the head of the doll.

Arms are made by binding two 8-inch pieces of straw at the ends with wire or string. Insert the arms through the body below the head and attach with wire or string.

To make the skirt, fan out the straw that forms the "legs." Loopwire or a 6-inch piece of straw around and between the strands so they remain in a fanned-out position.

Crios Bhríde (St. Brigid's Belt)

Select three long pieces of straw that are not the same size. Attach one end of the three pieces using string or wire. Braid the straw gradually adding in new pieces until the braid is long enough to use as a belt.
As an option, attach both ends of a two-foot long garland of straw to make a circle.

Make two seven-inch-long braids of straw. Attach to the circle with wire or string to make a cross.

Dip Candle-making

Candlemaking is a craft that dates back to ancient times. Before electricity, people depended on candles to light their homes. In Europe, candlemaking was perfected during the Middle Ages. Candles were generally made from tallow (animal fat) or beeswax. Beeswax candles were more expensive to make and were generally reserved for religious use.

Materials:

Electric hot plate, two-quart pan, 2 coffee cans, pencils, wick, and paraffin.

Put a quart of water in two-quart pan and heat the water to a soft boil. Put a chunk of paraffin in the coffee can and place the can in the pan of water. Lower the heat and wait until the paraffin melts.

Fill the second coffee can three-quarters of the way full with cold water.

Tie an eight-to-10-inch length of wick around a pencil. Tie a knot in the other end of the wick.

Quickly dip the wick in and out of the melted paraffin. Dip into the cold water. Repeat the process over and over again so that the wax builds up on the wick. Occasionally, shape the wax by rolling it between your hands.

When the candle is a satisfactory size, cut it off the pencil leaving about 1/2 inch of wick exposed.

Candles can be "mass produced" by attaching more than one wick to a pencil.

Sources: David Shaw-Smith, ed. (1948), *Ireland's Traditional Crafts.* London: Thames and Hudson; Lowell Thompson and Norman Machart (1982). *Authentic Craft Activities to Enrich the Social Studies.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America. Reprinted by permission of Thames and Hudson.

Ireland's National Game

BACKGROUND

It is important for students to know that Irish traditions, developed long before the famine in music, dance, visual arts, and sports, have been carried on despite the tremendous impact of the Great Irish Famine. The sport of hurling is one example.

Hurley, or hurling, Ireland's national game, is played with a hurling stick called a camán [cam-AWN] which is made of ash and looks a little like a field hockey stick. The women's game is called camogie. Hurlers, 15 to a side, move a small leather ball called a sliothar [SLIT-her] down the field by pucking it (hitting it) with the camán, carrying it in the hand for not more than three paces or bouncing it on the camán while running at top speed. Hurley is reputed to be the world's fastest game.

Goals worth three points each are scored when the sliothar crosses over the bar of the goal posts.

Hurley was played in Ireland before the Great Irish Famine. In fact, Old Irish manuscripts describing the boyhood deeds of Ireland's epic hero Cuchulain [COO-hull-en] tell of his defeating the entire boy corps of warriors in a game of hurley. In this activity, students will listen to the story of when Cuchulain, who was called Setanta until he was six, arrived at the kings' fort eager to join the boy warriors. When he arrived, the boys were playing a game of hurley. In this activity, the class will listen to the rest of the story, take notes, and respond to questions.

This activity can be followed by the activity *Hurler Christy Ring: Ireland's Greatest Athlete*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Hurlers

Setanta Plays Hurley

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Carroll, Noel. *Sport in Ireland.* Dublin: Government of Ireland, 1979, pp.14-18.

Heaney, Marie. "The Boyhood Deeds of Cuchulain," *Over Nine Wave*. Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995, pp.73-75

O'Maolfabháil, Art. *Camán: 2000 Years of Hurling in Ireland*. Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1973.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Camán and sliothar, if available

Sample comic strips (12 or more cells)

Videotapes of hurley if available

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Listen and take notes for the purpose of discussing the handout *Setanta Plays Hurley*.

Work effectively in groups to capture the story of Setanta playing in a comic strip.

Create a dialogue of "boasting" that would be appropriate for the story of *Setanta Plays Hurley.*

Understand the culture of Ireland before the Great Irish Famine.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELA 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

ELA 4: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

Arts 1: Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theater, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (Theatre)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Read historical narratives, myths, legends, biographies, and autobiographies to learn about how historical figures lived, their motivations, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.

Study about different world cultures and civilizations focusing on their accomplishments, contributions, values, beliefs, and traditions.

Take turns speaking and responding to others' ideas in conversations in familiar topics.

Take effective use of language and style to connect the message with the audience and context.

Select and use strategies that have been taught for note taking, organizing, and categorizing information.

Read aloud with expression, conveying the meaning and mood of a work.

Imitate various experiences through pantomime, play making, dramatic play, story dramatization, storytelling, role playing, improvisation and guided play writing.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- observe and conclude
- reflective thinking
- think rationally about content
- participate in interpersonal and group activities
- present information
- synthesize information

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

Physical Education

MULTICULTURALISM

Sports of other countries

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Prepare students for taking notes on the handout *Setanta Plays Hurley* that will be read aloud by the teacher. Students should listen to the passage the first time without taking notes, and then begin recording notes during the second reading.

Students can compare notes with partners, answering the following questions:

Why was the captain of the boy corp angry at Setanta?

What rules did Setanta break?

What skills did Setanta demonstrate as a hurler? As a fighter?

Describe Setanta's war spasm.

What did King Conor ask the boy corps to do with Setanta?

How did Setanta respond? Why?

What was the outcome?

Did you answer these questions from memory, or were the answers found in your notes?

How could your note taking have been improved so that they were a good source for answering the questions?

2. Follow up the partner discussions with a class discussion about traits that the early Irish valued in their heroes.

3. Working in pairs or groups, students can make comic strips (12 or more cells) of Setanta's battle with the boy corps.

4. One feature of old Irish stories and other epic literature is the boasting that goes on between rival heroes. Ask the students: Why did they boast? What were the heroes trying to do with their boasting? What boasting have you heard? Have you ever boasted about something?

Describe to the students the tradition followed by the New Zealand rugby team. They perform their *haka* at the start of international rugby matches. The *haka*, a tradition adopted from their native Maori people, features menacing grimaces and movement designed to frighten the opposition. This is an interesting cross-cultural phenomenon: New Zealanders playing a European game have adopted a native Maori tradition as a signature pre-game ritual.

Students can write and perform an exchange of boasts between Setanta and Folaman.

5. Ask a Physical Education teacher to assist students in locating the rules and description of hurley for the class to experiment with playing the game. Invite a guest who is familiar with the game or show videotapes of the game being played in Ireland. Ask students to discuss other games from other countries that are either not played in America or are not as popular in America as in their home country. For example, what are cricket, soccer, football, and rugby in other countries?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Write a myth that involves a sport such as jousting, soccer, running, or javelin-throwing.

Take notes on another short story about Irish history and answer questions, citing the notes. (See handouts found in this curriculum as sources for note taking, or *Culann's Hound: Cuchulain Gets His Name,*" Heaney, pp. 76-79 in Additional Readings.) Note: Cuchulain's name is also spelled Cuchulainn or Cú Chulainn.

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity is one of a series of activities about Ireland before the Great Irish Famine that is meant to give students an appreciation of the texture of Irish culture in rural Ireland. Many contemporary accounts of pre-famine Ireland concentrate only on Ireland's political struggle for the repeal of the Act of Union with Great Britain and its precarious economic conditions.

When this activity was field tested, students enjoyed trying to bounce the sliothar on the camán while running. After trying it, they appreciated the skill involved. If the school is in an area where the Gaelic Athletic Association is active, students might have an opportunity to see hurling played, or to play the game themselves.

Goalers-Hurley-Hurling

Source: William Willes. Print Collection: National Library of Ireland.
Used with permission of the National Library of Ireland.

Setanta Plays Hurley

The boys, one hundred and fifty in all, were on the green when Setanta arrived. Some were practicing their fighting skills and others were playing hurley. Their captain was Folaman, Connor Mac Nessa's son. Setanta rushed headlong to join in the game. He got the ball and, dodging round the astonished boys, slipped it past them and scored a goal. Folaman was angry at the intrusion and he called the boys who were standing open-mouthed to gather round him.

"No one has a right to join our group and interrupt a game like this without having the manners to ask our permission!" he said angrily. "It is an insult to us. Come on, we'll all attack him together and kill him. He deserves it. He's a nobody, some minor chieftain's son. A nonentity, otherwise he would have been given safe-conduct here."

The boys flung their hurleys at Setanta's head, but he ducked and dodged so that not one of them struck him. When the balls showered down on him he fielded them with his arms and fists and elbows. They cast their spears at him but he deflected them all with the toy shield. Suddenly a war spasm came over the boy. His face became distorted and discolored with anger, his eyes squinted and rolled, his mouth gaped wide open and his teeth were bared, his hair stood straight up on end and round his head played a bright circle of light.

In this frenzy, Setanta rushed at the crowd of boys and knocked to the ground fifty of them who were far bigger than he. He chased five others through the hall where the king and Fergus were playing chess and took a shortcut by jumping across the board set out between the two men. Conor grabbed the child by the arms, "Hold on, young man!" he said. "This is rough treatment you're giving these boys!"

"They deserve it! countered the boy. "I'm Setanta, the son of Sualdam [SOOL-dam] and your sister Dechtire [DECK-tir]. I've come a long way to join them and a strange welcome I've got!" "Don't you know the rules of the group?" demanded the king. "These boys are forbidden by a most solemn code to allow a newcomer to join them until he has first of all claimed their protection."

"I didn't know that at all," said Setanta, "otherwise I would have done what is required."

Conor called the boy corps to order and explained this to them. He asked them to take Setanta under their protection. They agreed and so Setanta was allowed to join their ranks. No sooner had they restarted the game than Setanta attacked them anew. Fifty more boys fell to the ground when he charged. Their fathers thought their sons were dead but it was fear of Setanta that had put most of them to the ground.

"What are you doing <u>now</u>? yelled the king. "What's wrong with you?"

"I'll fell every one of them," Setanta yelled back, "until they agree to come under <u>my</u> protection in the same way that I came under <u>theirs</u>!"

The terrified boys agreed and placed themselves under the protection of Setanta, though he was not yet seven years old.

Source: Marie Heaney. "The Boyhood Deeds of Cuchulain," *Over Nine Waves.* Boston: Faber and Faber, 1995. pp. 73-75.
Used with permission of Faber and Faber.

Hurler Christy Ring: Ireland's Greatest Athlete

BACKGROUND

When the *Irish Echo* named its greatest athletes of the 20th century, they placed the Cork hurler Christy Ring (1920-1979) at the top of their list. Mark Jones of the *Echo* said, "Ring is the undisputed No. 1. He was a colossus, his reputation forged by God-given eye-hand coordination, physical strength and obsessive dedication." Ring won eight All-Ireland medals for hurling and played with senior teams from 1939-1963. Ring died unexpectedly at the age of 58 and all of Ireland mourned.

Hurling is a traditional Irish game played with two teams of 15 men each, on a rectangular field 140 yards long. Points are scored by pushing, carrying, or throwing a leather-covered ball between goal posts. A wide-bladed stick resembling a hockey stick is used.

This activity gives students the opportunity to experiment with *simile* as a way to describe one thing in terms of another, using vivid language.

This activity can be used in conjunction with the activity *Ireland's National Game.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Christy Ring

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Jones, Mark. "The Fab 5 of Irish Sports," *Irish Echo*, LXXIII, 1 (Dec. 29, 1999-Jan 11, 2000), pp. 52.

O'Tuama, Seán. "Christy Ring," *Death in the Land of Youth.* trans. From Irish by Peter Denman and Seán O'Tuama. Cork: Cork University Press, 1997.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Poems on board (see Learning Experience #2 in this activity)

Audio-Visual materials and books showing the game of hurling

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the contribution of Christy Ring to Irish culture.

Create a poem using simile.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

ELA 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Investigate the roles and contributions of individuals and groups in relation to key social, political, cultural, and religious practices throughout world history.

Identify significant literary elements and use those elements to interpret the work.

Recognize different levels of meaning.

Read aloud with expression, conveying the meaning and mood of a work.

Present responses to and interpretations of literature, making reference to the literary elements found in the text and connections with their personal knowledge and experience.

Write poems that observe the conventions of the genre and contain interesting and effective language and voice.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- reflective thinking
- interpret information
- conceptualize
- consult and interpret primary sources

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to describe the most memorable moments in sports they have seen. Who are some of their favorite athletes? What are the skills they admire about them?

Read Seán O'Tuama's poem "Christy Ring" from the handout. Vocabulary words in the poem are: pitch (the playing field), ruck (heap or stack but also used in horse racing to describe the horses left behind when the fastest move ahead of the pack), smithereens (from the Irish word *smidiríní*: to break into tiny bits). What did the poet admire about the hurler? O'Tuama counted on his reader to be familiar with the story of CúChulainn's boyhood deeds when he was called Setanta and was a fierce, skillful hurler. What details from the story of Setanta does O'Tuama use in his poem about Christy Ring? Did Ring have CúChulainn's hero's light?

Ring died suddenly, and the poet says that he has "not managed yet to bury Christy Ring." He thinks of a suitable tomb: the prehistoric monument at Newgrange built during the Irish Stone Age (3000 BC). The monument has a "roof box," an opening over the entrance that is built in such a way that at sunrise on the shortest day of the year (December 21), the sun's rays shine through the opening into the farthest recess of the stone passage grave. It appears to have been designed to reassure those early people that there is light even on the darkest days of winter. Aengus was the Irish god of love. Why does O'Tuama think that Newgrange might be a fitting place for Christy Ring?

2. Sometimes we describe human traits in terms of some other phenomenon: animals, forces of nature. We say "quick as a flash," "strong as an ox," "moves like greased lightening," "runs like the wind," "swims like a fish," "leaps like a gazelle." The boxer Mohammed Ali once said about himself as a boxer, "I float like a butterfly and sting like a bee." What did he mean? Was that a vivid way to describe himself? Why?

We call comparisons that use *like* or *as* similes. Many poets use similes to describe one thing in terms of another. Can students think of any? "shook when he laughed like a bowl full of jelly" (Moore, "Twas the Night Before Christmas"), "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (Wordsworth, "The Daffodils"), "My luve is like a red, red rose" (Burns, "My Luve").

Using three similes, ask students to write poems about athletes they admire: Here are some examples of athlete poems with three similes:

Sammy Sosa

eyes the ball like an eagle
ready to run like a lion
when his bat explodes like a firecracker

Peekaboo (Street)

crouched like a ball into her turn
she slips like a snake around the pole
sending snow sparkling like crystal

Air (Michael) Jordan

Like a locomotive
Jordan pounds down the court like a raging bull
Till he jumps
Light as a feather

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Write a paragraph explaining why the use of simile would enhance the meaning of a poem.

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity can be used with the activity *Ireland's National Game*. It gives students a chance to see that supernatural or natural phenomenon have been used to describe larger-than-life characters like champion athletes.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For younger students:

Research games that are popular in countries other than the United States.

For advanced students:

Research poems that contain similes.

Christy Ring

He aimed at the impossible
each Sunday on the pitch;
sometimes he succeeded.

Down on one knee,
trapped in a corner of the field,
when his prechristian electronic eye
lit up in combat,
and the ball, a missle,
sped from him straight above the bar,
the air shook in awe.

When a driving lunge
brought him clear beyond
the ruck of men,
and the ball, propelled,
self-destructed in the net
to smithereens of light,
our cheering became a battle cry.

In one moment of raw frenzy
as his playing days ran out,
he summoned Cú Chulainn
to aid him on the pitch:
his trunk swelled up
in sight of thousands,
one eye bulged
and danced, demented,
through clash and crash
hue and cry
men were toppled
hot blood spurted
and as he rammed in
three lethal goals
all the gods of ancient Ireland
lent his hurley a guiding hand.

Looking at his corpse laid out,
the day of his untimely death,
a woman said:
"It would be a sin to bury such a
man."

I have not managed yet to bury
Christy Ring.
Sometimes I imagine him
being venerated
in the care of the great god, Aengus,
on a slab at Newgrange
and at each winter solstice
for just one half an hour
a ray of sunshine
lighting up his countenance.

But no friend of his could think
of laying Christy Ring eternally to
rest
locked in with ancient miracles -
for oh the miracles of the living flesh
we saw when his countenance lit up
winter days and summer days,
Sundays in and Sundays out,
on the playing pitch.

Seán O'Tuama

Source: Seán O'Tuama. "Christy Ring," trans. from Irish by Peter Denman and Seán O'Tuama, in *Death in the Land of Youth*, by Sean ÓTuama (Cork: Cork University Press, 1997), pp. 15–17.

Folk Songs From Two Traditions: The Irish and African-American

BACKGROUND

Frederick Douglass, the African-American abolitionist, was in Ireland during the Great Irish Famine. Later, in his autobiography, *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1882), Douglass recalls the similarity between the "wild and plaintive notes" of African-American music that he heard as a boy sung by slaves, and the music he heard in Ireland during the famine. "Child as I was, these wild songs greatly depressed my spirits. Nowhere outside of dear old Ireland, in the days of want and famine, have I heard sounds so mournful." Having studied the songs *The Famine Song* and *Nobody Knows de Trouble I've Seen*, students will be asked whether they agree with Douglass that the songs share a similar tone and message.

Douglass visited Ireland in 1845 where he was welcomed by Irish Quaker abolitionists who would be among the organizers of the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends that administered famine relief in 1846 and 1847. (See the activity *Frederick Douglass Describes Irish Poverty.*)

Teachers also may want to use the activities *Kilkelly: A Ballad As Social History* and *Music of the Great Irish Famine.*

(Note: This activity may need to be carried out with the assistance of a music teacher.)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Famine Song

Nobody Knows de Trouble I've Seen

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Dett, R. Nathaniel. *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro.* Hampton: Hampton Institute Press, 1927.

Douglass, Frederick. *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass.* Ware: Wordsworth American Classics, 1996 [1882].

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Music of the spiritual song, *Nobody Knows de Trouble I've Seen*

Information on international human rights issues

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Compare traditional folk songs from different cultures and identify similarities in context and meaning.

Describe and appreciate how songs reflect the tenor of historical times, especially the cultures of the 19th century.

Describe and appreciate how rhythm, scale, and style of singing can be significant in conveying the meaning of a song.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELA 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

ELA 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

Arts 1: Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theater, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (Music)

Arts 3: Respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought. (Music)

Arts 4: Develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society. (Music)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Explore narrative accounts of important events from world history to learn about different accounts of the past to begin to understand how interpretations and perspectives develop.

Interpret and analyze documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history.

Consider different interpretations of key events and developments in world history and understand the differences in these accounts.

View historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music and artifacts.

Select information appropriate to the purpose of their investigation and relate ideas from one text to another.

Support inferences about information and ideas with reference to text features, such as vocabulary and organizational patterns.

Compare and synthesize information from different sources.

Recognize different levels of meaning.

Read aloud with expression, conveying the meaning and mood of a work.

Sing and/or play, alone and in combination with other voice or instrument parts, a varied repertoire of folk, art, and contemporary songs, from notation, with a good tone, pitch, duration, and loudness.

Use appropriate terms to reflect a working knowledge of the musical elements.

Use appropriate terms to reflect a working knowledge of social-musical functions and uses (appropriate choices of music for common ceremonies and other events).

Identify the cultural contexts of a performance or recording and perform (with movement, where culturally appropriate) a varied repertoire of folk, art, and contemporary selections from the basic cultures that represent the peoples of the world.

Discuss the current and past cultural, social, and political uses for the music they listen to and perform.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

. observe and conclude
. reflective thinking
. inquire, question, probe
. draw conclusions
. think rationally about content
. view information from a variety of perspectives
. interpret information and data
. reflect upon content/form opinions

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

Arts

UNITY AND DIVERSITY

Identify similarities in Irish and African-American cultures in the 19th century

MULTICULTURALISM

Identify similarities in two different cultures

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Review the learning activity *Traditional Songs About the Irish Potato* to familiarize students with the words and meaning of *The Famine Song.*

   Then review the words and melody of the spiritual song, *Nobody Knows de Trouble I've Seen* on the handout. Discuss the context of both songs.

2. Explain to students that Frederick Douglass used the term *mournful* to describe the music he heard in Ireland during the famine, and the slave songs he heard as a boy. Do you think these songs are mournful? What about them sound sad? How do the singers in the songs see their lives? Do they have any hope? What words or lines in the songs tell you how they feel? Both songs use the word *down*. What to they mean when they say *down*? Do they mean down as a place, down as a feeling or both?

3. Ask students to hum the melodies. Are they sad? What about the melodies makes them sad? They are both played in a minor key. Listen to a minor scale. New listen to the major scale in the same key. What is the difference? Which scale—major or minor—goes best with a sad song? What note in the minor scale is *sad* note?

   The tempo is the speed of the music. Should these songs be sung slowly or quickly? Identify the tempo for each song.

   Notice that these songs are sung in unison, as one voice, not in harmony. The emotion of the singer gives each song its special meaning. How would you tell a singer to sing *The Famine Song* or *Nobody Knows de Trouble I've Seen* in order to convey the mood and message of the songs?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Identify key words in the two songs and discuss how they reflect the context of the time and convey meaning.

Create a poem that depicts meaning through tone.

TEACHER REFLECTION

The use of folk songs can encourage students to think globally, especially when they see that the words and messages of the music of one culture is similar to another culture.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

For younger students:

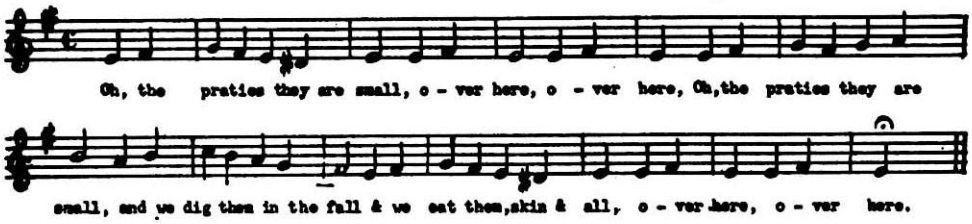
Students can create a narrative accompaniment to the songs that explains the meaning in their own words.

For advanced students:

Students can identify additional folk songs, including other spirituals, that reflect the tenor of the times of *The Famine Song* and *Nobody Knows de Trouble I've Seen*.

The opening track of the Riverdance CD gives students a contemporary example of unison singing in traditional style.

THE FAMINE SONG



Oh, the praties they are small, over here, over here,
Oh the praties they are small and we dig them in the Fall
And we eat them skin and all, over here, over here.

Oh, we wish that we were geese, night and morn, night and morn,
Oh, we wish that we were geese and could live our lives in peace
Till the hour of our release, eating corn, eating corn.

Oh, we're down into the dust, over here, over here,
Oh, we're down into the dust, but the Lord in whom we trust
Will repay us crumb for crust, over here, over here.

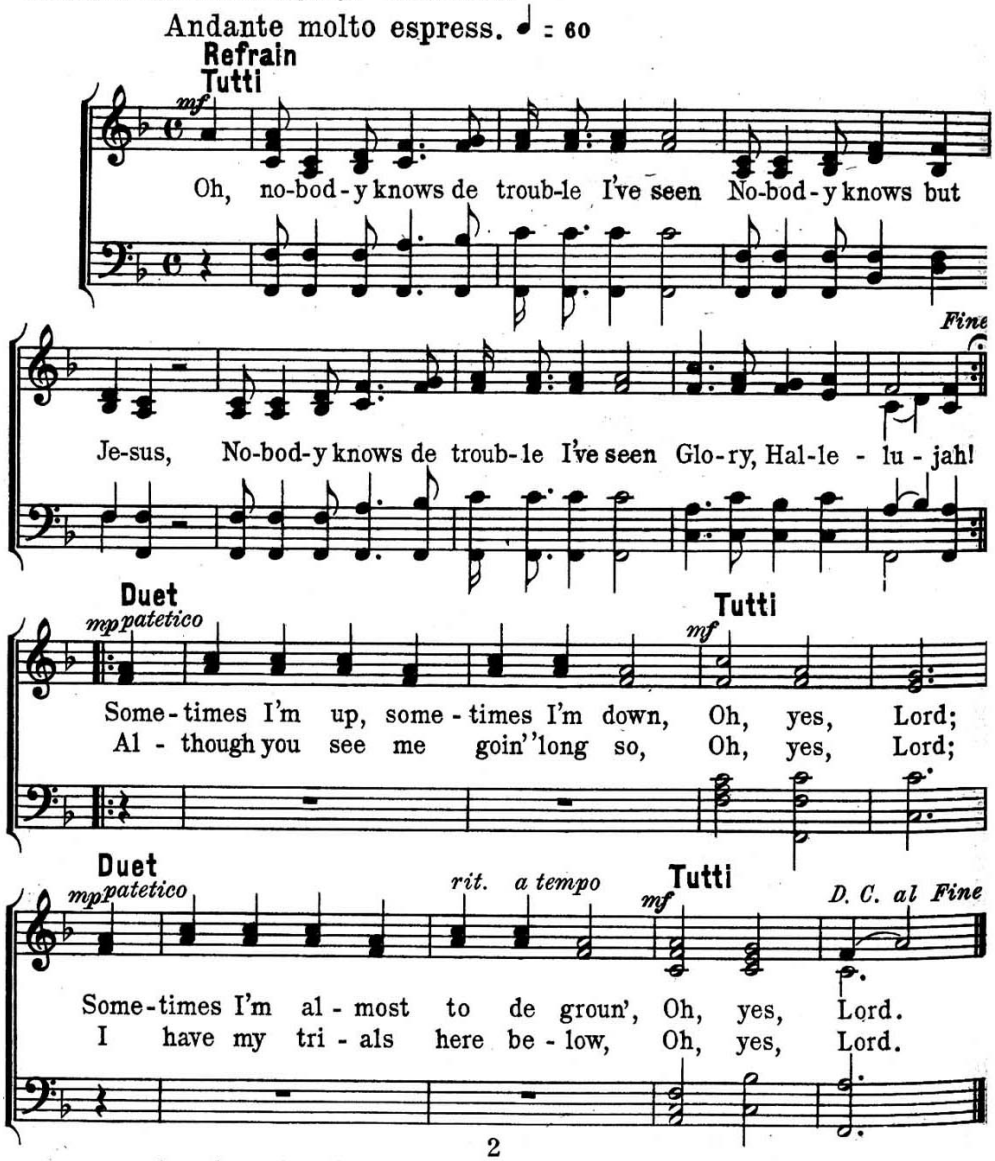
Source: Patrick Glavin. *Irish Songs of Resistance*. New York: Oak Publications, 1962. pp. 44.

This version of "Nobody Knows de Trouble I've Seen," published in 1927 from the Hampton Institute collection of African American religious songs written in authentic languages.

Hymns of Tribulation

Nobody Knows de Trouble I've Seen

This song was a favorite in the Sea Islands. Once when there had been a good deal of ill feeling excited, and trouble was apprehended, owing to the uncertain action of the Government in regard to the confiscated lands on the Sea Islands, Gen. Howard was called upon to address the colored people earnestly. To prepare them to listen, he asked them to sing. Immediately an old woman on the outskirts of the meeting began "Nobody knows the trouble I've seen," and the whole audience joined in. The General was so affected by the plaintive melody, that he found it difficult to maintain his official dignity.— *Contributor*



2

One day when I was walkin' along, Oh,yes, Lord,
De element opened, an' de Love came down, Oh,yes, Lord,
I never shall forget dat day, Oh,yes, Lord,
When Jesus washed my sins away, Oh,yes, Lord,
Chorus— Oh, nobody knows de trouble I've seen, etc.

Source: R. Nathaniel Dett, ed. **Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro**. Hampton, VA: Hampton Institute press, 1927. p. 232

Daniel O'Connell: Irishman of the Millennium

BACKGROUND

At the end of the twentieth century, *The Sunday Times* (Irish Edition) asked people of Ireland to vote for the person of the millennium. They selected Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847) as the most important Irish figure in 1000 years. Why? He was a champion of social democracy. He opened the British Parliament to qualified people of all religions, he was an advocate for social justice in his condemnation of slavery, and he worked for reform in government such as the secret ballot and a wider electorate. He is also greatly admired for the way he pursued his causes. O'Connell was committed to non-violent constitutional methods of change.

While O'Connell takes first place in the judgement of the Irish of today, one hundred years ago he was a larger-than-life character whose historical reputation was enhanced by folklore. The Irish playwright Lady Gregory collected twenty legends about O'Connell for her *Kiltartan History Book.* Realizing in 1909 that the legends she collected, some from those who had actually seen O'Connell, formed a folk biography of an epic hero, she wrote:

> *The stories of him show more than any other how swiftly myths and traditions already in the air may gather around a memory much loved and much spoken of. I have known many who had seen and heard him speak, and yet he had already been given a miraculous birth, and the powers of a saint are on the way to him (Gregory 149).*

The miraculous birth Lady Gregory mentioned is one of the characteristics shared by folk and epic heroes. Other characteristics include: extraordinary attributes (usually strength and cleverness) and death at the height of his power. O'Connell's physical power was his voice and his ability to project his voice at outdoor meetings.

O'Connell's cleverness often saved himself and others, but was also exaggerated and built into stories about him. In one legend he makes a messenger open a suspicious parcel which explodes, killing him but saving O'Connell. In another, he turns the shoes on his horse to confuse the pursuer.

To the folk accounts of O'Connell's clever tactics, actual court record can be added that show O'Connell's skill at cross-examination. He did save poor, innocent clients from powerfully backed adversaries.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Daniel O'Connell, Do You Understand Irish?

Frederick Douglass' Tribute to Daniel O'Connell (2 versions for differentiated instruction)

Daniel O'Connell

RESOURCES

Gregory, Augusta. "The Kiltartan History Book," *The Kiltartan Books*. Gerrardo Cross: Colin Smythe, 1971, pp. 149.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Explain why Daniel O'Connell was voted Man of the Millennium by the Irish people.

Create a carton strip or story board of the legends and myths related to Daniel O'Connell.

Describe O'Connell's contribution to the rise of Irish democracy.

Explain the source of respect and affection Frederick Douglass felt for Daniel O'Connell.

Describe the impact of an eloquent speaker.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

Arts 1: Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (Theatre)

ELA 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

ELA 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Analyze the roles and contributions of individuals to social, political, economic, cultural, and religious practices and activities.

View history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments in world history by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents.

Interpret and analyze documents related to significant developments and events in world history.

Review speeches and debates for persuasion and style, as well as for content.

Write monologues and scenes to communicate ideas and feelings.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- incorporate reflective thinking
- draw conclusions
- interpret information
- consult and interpret primary sources

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to read the handout of one of the most famous O'Connell legends, *Daniel O'Connell, Do You Understand Irish?* What can students learn from the activity? What do they think of the servant girl? What does the story say about Daniel O'Connell? What part does the Irish language play in the story? Is the story consistent with O'Connell's reputation for cleverness? Ask students to draw a strip cartoon or story board of the story. What incidents will they include? How will they depict each character? Other students may want to turn the story into a skit and present it to the class.
2. O'Connell's first campaign for Catholic Emancipation was based on his conviction that religion should be separated from government and that religion should not disqualify one from serving in parliament. O'Connell was not the first person to be concerned with the right of Catholics to enter parliament, but he was the person who turned the cause into a mass movement involving the Irish people in the campaign. He used his powerful speaking voice to explain his cause to crowds at mass meetings, and he used the

press to reach an increasingly English-literate Irish readership; he founded the Catholic Association which was supported by the Irish who subscribed a penny each. The Association's parish-based organizational structure was later successfully adopted by the Irish in America for its urban, ward politics.

In the summer of 1828, O'Connell got his chance to test the political force of the Catholic Association when he ran for parliament from Co. Clare and defeated the incumbent Vesey Fitzgerald with the help of eligible voters who marched into Ennis to cast their votes for O'Connell. O'Connell returned to Dublin in triumph.

The following spring, parliament passed the Catholic Emancipation Bill (Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829), and O'Connell entered parliament. As important as Catholic Emancipation was to religious freedom and the separation of Church and State, so was O'Connell's method: a unified popular movement using only constitutional and non-violent means that could accomplish significant political change. Can students think of other political change achieved by constitutional methods?

3. Since O'Connell advocated liberty for all, he vigorously opposed slavery. Ask students to read Frederick Douglass' testimony written thirty-five years after O'Connell's death. They will notice the respect and affection Douglass had for his friend who stood against tyranny and for liberty for all. O'Connell's headquarters was at Conciliation Hall, a building that accommodated 3000 and that O'Connell planned would be the Irish House of Commons once Ireland had Repeal. How does Douglass describe O'Connell? Identify and discuss Douglass' use of simile.

What had Douglass heard about O'Connell? Did he doubt O'Connell's powers as an orator? What did he learn when he heard O'Connell speak? Have students heard any remarkable speakers, those who have the power to move a crowd? Ask them to share their experiences hearing such a speaker with the class.

How did Douglass describe the affection that O'Connell had for the Irish? The English press called O'Connell the "King of the Beggars." While they meant the name as an insult, one of O'Connell's biographers titled his book *King of the Beggars*. What did Douglass say that suggests the title for an O'Connell biography is a good one?

Why do you think Douglass liked it when O'Connell introduced him to the Irish audience at Conciliation Hall as "The Black O'Connell"? What things did O'Connell do in his own behavior to show his scorn for slavery?

4. After his success with Catholic Emancipation, O'Connell's next massive campaign was the Repeal of the Act of Union and the restoration of an Irish parliament to legislate for Irish affairs. O'Connell declared 1843 Repeal Year, petitioned parliament for repeal of the union and mobilized his forces.

While many in parliament had supported religious freedom and voted for Catholic Emancipation, they were strongly for the Act of Union. They were unsympathetic to O'Connell's cause and were less tolerant of O'Connell's methods of gathering support for his political goals. At the same time, younger Irish politicians known as the Young Irelanders began to be impatient with O'Connell's non-violent principles and pressed for action, not words.

O'Connell called mass meetings at Trim, Co. Meath in March and at Tara, Co. Meath in August. When he announced a third meeting for October at Clontarf, the place where the Irish drove the Norsemen into the sea, the British proclaimed the gathering. Rather than risk a violent confrontation and true to his word that he would work only within the law, O'Connell canceled the meeting. With that decision, O'Connell's influence on the nationalists declined and the physical force advocates came to dominate the nationalist movement. O'Connell spent his last years trying to get relief for his countrymen suffering from the Great Irish Famine. While many nationalists would have called O'Connell a failure when he died, in 1847 the Irish people named him the most important Irish person of the millennium. How do students explain that?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

One of Daniel O'Connell's biographers was the Irish writer Sean O'Faoláin, [O'FAIL-awn] author of *King of the Beggars: Daniel O'Connell and the Rise of Irish Democracy*. O'Faolain wrote, "What he gave us is hard to tell. Much good, much bad, but one thing was priceless—the principle of life as a democracy" (329). If a democracy is a state where all have equal rights, how did O'Connell contribute to the rise of Irish democracy?

TEACHER REFLECTION

In field tests of this activity, the Irish opinion poll led to a discussion of who students would nominate as the American of the millennium.

Students can use this activity as a basis for a wider discussion of what constitutes a democracy and the contributions of national leaders to foster the growth of civil rights for all people. This activity can be used in conjunction with *The Great Irish Famine* and *Quest for Independence.*

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

How can an opinion poll be conducted fairly and without bias? Ask students what rules do they think poll-takers follow when determining their sample, their questions, and the reporting of results? Suggest that they conduct a study with a research organization to find out more about the poll-taking process, considering why the results are important to the public.

Ask students to compare the contributions of O'Connell, Mahatma Ghandi, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to the idea of democracy in their countries.

Daniel O’Connell, Do You Understand Irish?

One time when Daniel O’Connell was in England he was invited to tea with powerful peers who did not like him and wanted to kill him. The servant girl attending them was Irish and an Irish-speaker and she did not want any harm to come to O’Connell.

She asked O’Connell, “Daniel O’Connell, do you understand Irish?”

“I do,” said he, “what do you want to say?”

“There is a thing in your cup that would kill hundreds. Turn off the light and switch it, if you can.”

“If it is true,” he said, “May your fortune be a good one.” O’Connell did nothing except take a gold ring from his finger and throw it under the table. The English looked for it and O’Connell switched his cup. When they attended to the ring, they started to drink their tea and when one of the Englishmen took his swallow, he collapsed and died.

Source: Tomás de Bháldraithe. *The Irish of Cois Fhairrge, Co. Galway*. Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. 1945. pp. 73. Translated by Maureen Murphy, Great Irish Curriculum Committee. Reprinted with permission of the Governing Board of the School of Celtic Studies of the Dublin Institute of Advanced Studies.

Frederick Douglass' Tribute to Daniel O'Connell

Ireland did not get the Repeal of the Union. It is still the hope of the Irish people. Repeal isn't any stronger than it was when I met Daniel O'Connell. I had heard that he was a great speaker, but I did not believe that if he spoke before 20,000 or 30,000 people, many could hear him. I saw how he could do it when I saw how big he was and heard his musical voice. His words were like a thunder storm falling on a dry road. He could make his listeners mad or make them quiet. He was also witty and funny. I never heard anyone better.

He held the Irish in his hand and could lead them anywhere, because the Irish believed in him and loved him as they have no other leader since. I saw him in Dublin after he had been away. Children followed him saying, "There goes Dan!" "There goes Dan!" He looked on the ragged children like a loving father.

He was called "The Liberator." While he did not get Repeal for Ireland, he got the right for Catholics and for people of all religions to be members of the British Parliament. He was a friend of liberty. He introduced me to an Irish audience at his headquarters Conciliation Hall saying that I was the "Black O'Connell of the United States" and he spoke out against slavery.

O.A. Brownson charged O'Connell with attacking American institutions, O'Connell said he was not ashamed to attack the American institution of slavery. He said whenever people were oppressed, he would speak against it.

No statesman on either side of the Atlantic took a stronger stand against slavery. O'Connell would not shake hands with a slave owner or even be introduced to a slave owner. When Southerners wanted to send him money for Repeal he refused to take it. He called the money a bribe, "a blood-stained offering." He said he would "never purchase the freedom of Ireland with the price of slaves."

Source: Frederick Douglass. *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. Ware: Wordsworth American Classics, 1996. [1882]. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Edited for purposes of *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum.*

Frederick Douglass' Tribute to Daniel O'Connell

The repeal of the union between England and Ireland was not so fortunate. It is still, under one name or another, the cherished hope and aspiration of her sons. It stands little better or stronger than it did six-and-thirty years ago [1846], when its great advocate, Daniel O'Connell, welcomed me to Ireland and to "Conciliation Hall," and where I first had a specimen of his truly wondrous eloquence. Until I heard this man, I had thought that the story of his oratory and power was greatly exaggerated. I did not see how a man would speak to twenty or thirty-thousand people at one time, and be heard by any considerable number of them, but the mystery was solved when I saw his vast person and heard his musical voice.

His eloquence came down upon the vast assembly like a summer thunder-shower upon a dusty road. He could stir the multitude, at will, to a tempest of wrath, or reduce it to the silence with which a mother leaves the cradle-side of her sleeping babe. Such tenderness—such pathos—such world-embracing love! and, on the other hand, such indignation—such fiery and thunderous denunciation, and such wit and humor, I never heard surpassed, if equaled, at home or abroad. He held Ireland within the grasp of his strong hand, and could lead it whithersoever he would, for Ireland believed in him and loved him, as she has loved and believed in no leader since.

In Dublin, when he had been absent from that city a few weeks, I saw him followed through Sackville Street by a multitude of little boys and girls, shouting in loving accents, "There goes Dan! There goes Dan!" while he looked at the ragged and shoeless crowd with the kindly air of a loving parent returning to his gleeful children. He was called "The Liberator," and not without cause, for, though he failed to effect the repeal of the union between England and Ireland, he fought out the battle of Catholic emancipation and was clearly the friend of liberty the world over. In introducing me to an immense audience in Conciliation Hall, he playfully called me the "Black O'Connell of the United States;" nor did he let the occasion pass without his usual word of denunciation of our slave system.

O.A. Brownson had then recently become a Catholic, and taking advantage of his new Catholic audience, in Brownson's Review, had charged O'Connell with attacking American institutions. In reply, Mr. O'Connell said, "I am charged with attacking American institutions, as slavery is called; I am not ashamed of this attack. My sympathy is not confined to the narrow limits of my own green Ireland; my spirit walks abroad upon sea and land, and wherever there is oppression, I hate the oppressor, and wherever the tyrant rears his head, I will deal my bolts upon it; and wherever there is sorrow and suffering, there is my spirit to succour and relieve."

No transatlantic statesman bore a testimony more marked and telling against the crime and curse of slavery, than did Daniel O'Connell. He would shake the hand of no slave-holder, nor allow himself to be introduced to one, if he knew him to be such. When the friends of repeal in the Southern States sent him money with which to carry on his work, he, with ineffable scorn, refused the bribe, and sent back what he considered the blood-stained offering, saying he would "never purchase the freedom of Ireland with the price of slaves" (180-181).

Source: Frederick Douglass. *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*. Ware: Wordsworth American Classics, 1996. [1882]. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Source: Joseph Patrick Haverty,, **Daniel O'Connell** (c. 1836).
Used with permission of the National Gallery of Ireland.

Frederick Douglass Describes Irish Poverty

BACKGROUND

According to historian John Hope Franklin, Frederick Douglass was an "outstanding black abolitionist." Frederick Douglass was born a slave in Maryland in 1817. He escaped to freedom in New York in 1838. He became a prominent lecturer, writer and newspaper editor in the battle to end slavery. He was active in the Underground Railroad and was a recruiter of Black troops for the Union Army during the Civil War. Following the war, he continued to fight for equality for African Americans, and he served as a government official in appointed positions.

In his biography *My Bondage and my Freedom,* Douglass describes his risk of recapture after he wrote a pamphlet in 1845. Fellow abolitionists helped him escape to Great Britain where he remained for nearly two years. While Douglass was in exile he was purchased by a group of abolitionists and Quakers and manumitted, which allowed him to return to the United States. During his stay in Great Britain, Douglass visited Ireland and in his autobiography he described the conditions of the Irish poor. He was especially struck by the sadness of the Irish folk songs that he heard and which he compared to the music of enslaved Africans in the United States.

This activity can be used in conjunction with *Folk Songs From Two Traditions: The Irish and African-American.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Life of Frederick Douglass

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Douglass, Frederick. *My Bondage and My Freedom.* New York: Dover, 1969. [1855]

Douglass, Frederick. *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass: Written by Himself.* Ware: Wordsworth American Classics, Ltd., 1996.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

The Life of Frederick Douglass (slave songs pp. 28-29)

Songs: Paul Robeson singing "Go Down Moses" *Ballads for Americans*. Carnegie Hall Concert Vol. 2. VSD#79193.

Odetta singing "All the Pretty Little Horses" and "No More Auction Block," *The Essential Odetta*. Vanguard Twofer CV50#43/44.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Understand the history of Irish poverty by analyzing music and primary documents.

Discuss and evaluate Frederick Douglass' comparison of life as an enslaved African with conditions of the poor in Ireland.

Act as social historians as they examine primary sources to reconstruct historical experiences.

Write a biographical poem.

STANDARDS

SS 1: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELA 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

Arts 1: Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (Music)

Arts 3: Respond critically to a variety of works in the arts, connecting the individual work to other works and to other aspects of human endeavor and thought. (Music)

Arts 4: Develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape the diverse cultures of past and present society. (Music)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Know the roots of American culture, its development from many different traditions, and the ways many people from a variety of groups and backgrounds played a role in creating it.

Identify individuals who have helped to strengthen democracy in the United States and throughout the world.

Gather and organize information about the important achievements and contributions of individuals and groups living in New York State and the United States.

Compare and contrast the experiences of different ethnic, national, and religious groups, including Native American Indians, in the United States, explaining their contributions to American society and culture.

View historic events through the eyes of those who were there, as shown in their art, writings, music, and artifacts.

Interpret and analyze information from textbooks and nonfiction books for young adults, as well as reference materials, audio and media presentations, oral interviews, graphs, charts, diagrams, and electronic databases intended for a general audience.

Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information and between fact and opinion.

Produce oral and written reports on topics related to all school subjects.

Sing and/or play, alone and in combination with other voice or instrument parts, a varied repertoire of folk, art, and contemporary songs, from notation, with a good tone, pitch, duration, and loudness.

Through listening, analyze and evaluate their own and others' performances, improvisations, and compositions by identifying and comparing them with similar works and events.

Identify the cultural contexts of a performance or recording and perform (with movement, where culturally appropriate) a varied repertoire of folk, art, and contemporary selections from the basic cultures that represent the people of the world.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL LEARNING

- analytical thinking
- evaluate and connect evidence
- inquire, question, probe
- ask and answer logical questions

. interpret information and data
. acquire and organize information
. consult and interpret primary sources

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

UNITY AND DIVERSITY

Similarities between cultures

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Frederick Douglass' autobiography provides a unique opportunity to study an observer's account of the similarities and differences in the experiences of two different groups of people: African-American slaves and the pre-famine Irish.

Students should read passage A from the handout *The Life of Frederick Douglass* and answer questions 1-3 to prepare for a class discussion about Douglass' experiences as a slave, as an abolitionist, and as a traveler in England and Ireland in 1845.

2. Students can listen to or sing a song or songs that describe the African American slave experience. Recommended examples of songs include Paul Robeson singing "Go Down Moses," and Odetta singing "All the Pretty Little Horses" and "No More Auction Block" (see Classroom Materials). Students can discuss the meaning of the lyrics and the mood the songs convey. They can consider what we can learn about slavery from the songs and why the messages of the songs are so powerful.

3. Students should read passages B and C from The Life of Frederick Douglass worksheet and answer the questions. The Irish men and women that Douglass described were free, not slaves. Why did Douglass compare their songs to the songs of enslaved African Americans?

4. Using information from their readings and discussion, ask students to write a bio-poem about Frederick Douglass. Sample:

Frederick
Born Enslaved
Escaped to Freedom
Lecturer, Author, Abolitionist, Leader
Editor, Northern Star
Douglass

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Ask students to listen to songs, and then to list any descriptive or emotive words that occur to them: anger, frustration, determination, soothing, etc. Then ask students to write an observation about how the music captured a message about freedom, poverty, and living in exile.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Teachers may want to use this activity with *Folk Songs from Two Traditions: The Irish and African-American* and *Travelers in Pre-Famine Ireland.*

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

Ask students to identify songs that are *bio-poems*, writing a paragraph commenting on the content of the songs.

The Beatles' *Eleanor Rigby* and Elton John's *Candle in the Wind* are examples of songs that are bio-poems.

The Life of Frederick Douglass

Passage A: Who was Frederick Douglass?

Frederick Douglass was African American. He was born in February 1817 on a plantation in Maryland. According to his autobiography, Douglass' father may have been his mother's white "master." Because his mother was an enslaved African, Douglass was also a slave. She was hired out to work on another plantation, so Frederick Douglass hardly knew her. She died while he was still a young boy.

Frederick Douglass escaped to freedom in the north in 1838. He was twenty-one years old. He never told anyone how he escaped because he did not want to put the people who helped him in danger. We do know that he made it safely to New York then settled in Massachusetts.

Douglass devoted his life to ending slavery in the United States and to winning equal rights for African Americans. He worked as an abolitionist lecturer and newspaper editor and wrote his autobiography twice. During the Civil War, Frederick Douglass recruited blacks to join the Union army. After the war, he spent the rest of his life fighting against Jim Crow laws and racial segregation. Douglass was one of the first African Americans to hold an appointed political office in the United States. He died in 1895.

Passage B: Why was Frederick Douglass in Great Britain?

Even after he had reached the north, Frederick Douglass was still considered a runaway slave and the property of his former master. Douglass decided to fight to end slavery in the United States. He joined the abolitionists and traveled around New England giving anti-slavery lectures. In 1845, Frederick Douglass wrote pamphlets that described his experience as a slave. The publication of these pamphlets put Douglass in danger of being captured and being returned to the south. Abolitionist friends helped Frederick Douglass escape to Great Britain where he lived for almost two years. While living in Great Britain, Douglass traveled across England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, gave lectures on the evils of slavery, and wrote articles for abolitionist newspapers in the United States. During this time his supporters purchased his freedom for $700. This made it possible for Frederick Douglass to return to the United States as a free man.

Passage C: Why was Frederick Douglass in Great Britain?

In his autobiography, Frederick Douglass compared the songs of enslaved Africans and poor Irish during the Great Irish Famine. He wrote:

"I did not, when a slave, understand the deep meaning of those rude, and apparently incoherent songs. I was myself within the circle, so that I neither saw nor heard as those without might see and hear. They were tones, loud, long, long and deep, breathing the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery, and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. The hearing of those wild notes always depressed my spirits, and filled my heart with sadness."

Irish Friends and Frederick Douglass' Freedom

BACKGROUND

Born into slavery in America, Frederick Douglass (1817-1895) became one of the most passionate and eloquent abolitionists and a champion of rights for all. In 1845, Douglass toured Ireland and for the first time felt treated as an equal.

While in Ireland, Douglass was befriended by Irish Quakers who were active in the cause of abolitionism. Quakers Richard Allen, James Haughton, and Richard Davis Webb proposed to purchase Douglass' freedom and contributed money to a subscription for that purpose. Abolitionists were divided about purchasing a slave's freedom. Some believed that such purchases conceded the right to own persons as property. Douglass' view was that his purchase neither "...violated the laws of morality or economy" for he regarded the money as ransom and Douglass' liberty as worth more than his purchase price (*Douglass,* 196). Thomas Auld sold Douglass to Hugh Auld for $100, and Hugh Auld released Douglass on December 5, 1846.

This activity can be used in conjunction with *Frederick Douglass Describes Irish Poverty.*

RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Douglass, Frederick.*The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass.* Ware: Wordsworth American Classics, 1996. [1882]

Goodbody, Rob. *A Suitable Channel: Quaker Relief in the Great Famine.* Bray: Pale Publishing, 1995.

Harrison, Richard S. *Richard Davis Webb.* Dublin Quaker Printer. Skibbereen, Co. Cork: Red Barn, 1993. pp. 50-52.

Nicholson, Asenath. *Annals of the Famine in Ireland.* ed. Maureen Murphy. Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1998.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Understand the significance of the Society of Friends purchasing the freedom of Frederick Douglass.

Consider the impact of freedom in Ireland on Frederick Douglass.

Draw conclusions about how purchasing freedom may have affected the legitimacy of slave ownership.

STANDARDS

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELA 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

ELA 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Read historical narratives, myths, legends, biographies, and autobiographies to learn about how historical figures lived, their motivations, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.

Know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, foods, and religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures and civilizations.

Interpret and analyze documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history.

Understand the development and connectedness of Western civilization and other civilizations and cultures in many areas of the world and over time.

Understand the broad patterns, relationships, and interactions of cultures and civilizations during particular eras and across eras.

Analyze changing and competing interpretations of issues, events, and developments throughout world history.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- develop analytical thinking
- evaluate and connect evidence
- probe ideas and assumptions
- reflective thinking
- draw conclusions
- take and defend positions
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- identify premises and rationale for points of view
- set up hypotheses and alternative courses of action
- interpret information and data
- synthesize information

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask a student to read aloud the comments of Frederick Douglass while in Ireland:

> *I am covered with the soft grey fog of the Emerald Isle. I breathe and lo! the chattel becomes a man! I gaze around in vain for one who will question my equal humanity, claim me as a slave, or offer me an insult. I employ a cab—I am seated beside white people—I reach the hotel—I enter the same door—I am shown into the same parlour—I dine at the same table—and no one is offended. No delicate nose grows deformed in my presence. I find no difficulty in obtaining admission into any place of worship, instruction, or amusement, on equal terms, with people as white as any I ever saw in the United States. I meet nothing to remind me of my complexion* (186-187).

Phrase by phrase, ask students to analyze Douglass' meaning.

2. There is still slavery in parts of the world today. One place is the Sudan, in northeast Africa. Human Rights organizations are purchasing the freedom of people who are enslaved, but some critics charge that

this encourages the slave holders to capture and resell people. Ask students to discuss the issue of whether people who are purchasing the freedom of slaves are doing the right thing. What else would have to be done besides purchasing freedom? Does purchasing freedom legitimize slavery?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

During the Great Irish Famine, the Irish Friends (Quakers) who had helped to purchase Frederick Douglass' freedom were faced with a moral choice. As abolitionists they were pledged to have nothing to do with slave states; however, the cities of Charleston and Savannah offered to send famine relief supplies and money to the Central Relief Committee of the Irish Society of Friends who had organized soup kitchens and food supplies to feed the poor. Write an essay from the point of view of a member of the Central Relief Committee explaining why they would recommend or not recommend accepting help from slave states.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Students can discuss this activity in terms of slavery and injustice in the world today. Students could decide to raise money for an organization like UNICEF to help children who are economically exploited.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

Students can interview members of the Society of Friends (Quakers) to better understand their philosophy and to discuss some of the moral questions of the time of Frederick Douglass.

Pre-Famine Housing Conditions in Ireland

BACKGROUND

The 1841 Irish census report is a valuable document because it provides a picture of Ireland before the Great Irish Famine. Housing conditions are one measure of the standard of living of a people, and the classification of 491,278 of its 1,328,839 houses as housing type #4 (mud cabin with one room) is a stark measure of the pre-famine conditions for small farmers and landless agricultural laborers.

Other government reports provide additional information about Ireland before the Great Irish Famine. *The Poor Inquiry Report* of the 1830s reported on unemployment and land consolidation that led to evictions. In 1843, under the government of Sir Robert Peel, the Earl of Devon headed a commission to make a full-scale study of the Irish land system. Gearóid O'Tuathaigh [GE-royd O'Toohey] described the range of recommendations that accompanied their extremely informative report: "land reclamation, public works, grand jury reform, and, most important of all, (they) recommended the recognition in law and the extension throughout the rest of the country of the (Ulster Custom), that is, payment to an outgoing tenant of compensation for any permanent improvements made to the holding during his occupancy" (O'Tuathaigh 192-193).

Like *The Poor Law Inquiry Report*, the *Devon Commission Report* found consolidation common in Connacht and Munster. That meant that tenants living in little villages like Dooagh in Achill Island (Connacht) were subject to ejection (eviction, failure to renew the lease) so that the landlord could consolidate small holdings (Daly 27). Such tenants were not protected by the "Ulster Custom."

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *Homelife of the Irish* and *Pre-Famine Model Landlords.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Cabins at Dooagh Achill

House Accommodation 1841

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Aalen, F.H.A., "Buildings," in Aalen, Whelan and Stout, eds. *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape*. Cork: Cork University Press, 1977. pp. 145-164.

Daly, Mary E. *The Famine in Ireland*. Dundalk: Dublin Historical Association, 1986.

Danaher, Kevin. *Ireland's Vernacular Architecture.* Cork: Mercier, 1975.

Evans, Estyn. *Irish Folk Ways*. New York: Devin-Adair, 1957.

Flynn, Pat. "The Fourth Class in 1841 and Later," in *The Other Clare*, 15 (1991), pp. 55-56.

O'Danaher, Caoimhín. "The Bothan Scóir," in *North Munster Studies* (1967), pp. 489-498.

O'Tuathaigh, Gearóid. *Ireland Before the Famine 1798-1848.* Dublin: Gill, 1972.

Young, Arthur. *A Tour in Ireland in the Years 1776, 1777, and 1778*. London: Wilson, 1780.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Analyze documents related to pre-famine housing conditions.

Hypothesize about which areas of Ireland would be most vulnerable in a critical economic crisis like famine.

Understand the importance of housing conditions to the lives of the Irish in the 19th century.

STANDARDS

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the independent world in which we live—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth's surface.

Arts 1: Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (Visual Arts)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, child-rearing practices, ways of making a living, education and socialization practices, gender roles, foods, and religious and spiritual beliefs that distinguish different cultures and civilizations.

Interpret and analyze documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history.

Explore the lifestyles, beliefs, traditions, rules and laws, and social/cultural needs and wants of people during different periods in history and in different parts of the world.

View history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments in world history by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents.

Investigate important events and developments in world history by posing analytical questions, selecting relevant data, distinguishing fact from opinion, hypothesizing cause-and-effect relationships, testing these hypotheses, and forming conclusions.

Investigate how people depend on and modify the physical environment.

Create art works in which they use and evaluate different kinds of mediums, subjects, themes, symbols, metaphors, and images.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- evaluate and connect evidence
- probe ideas and assumptions
- reflective thinking
- draw conclusions
- take and defend positions
- probe assumptions for accuracy and viewpoints
- set up hypotheses and alternative courses of action
- interpret information and data
- synthesize information
- make generalizations
- identify patterns and themes

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to draw a picture of their house or apartment and describe its construction: number of rooms, materials used, numbers of windows and doors, roof type.

   In 1841, the Irish Census Commissioners designated four classes of houses:

   Class 1: better house than a class 2 house

   Class 2: a good farm house, or a house in a town with five to nine rooms and windows

   Class 3: better built mud cabin with two to four rooms and windows

   Class 4: mud cabin with one room

   The census of 1841 includes very important information about Ireland before the famine. One measure of the condition of the country is the kind of housing people had during those years. The census designated four classes of housing and mapped their distribution.

   Ask students to draw each type of house. Students in a technology class can do their drawing using a CAD program.

2. Ask students to look at the 1843 drawing of the houses in the village of Dooagh, on Achill Island in Co. Mayo. Describe the houses. What is their shape? What materials were used in their construction? What method would have been used to make the houses? How does the construction of the frame of the houses differ from house types in your neighborhood? What would provide light and ventilation in this house? Achill Island is rainy, windy, and cool but not usually cold enough to freeze. How do these houses protect their occupants from the weather? How do the houses relate to each other in the village? Do you see any kind of a pattern? How would you classify the houses in Dooagh? On what basis did you make your designation?

3. The 1841 Irish Census reported the numbers of each house type:

   Class 1: 40,080

   Class 2: 264,184

   Class 3: 533,297

   Class 4: 491,278

   Students can create charts and graphs of this information.

   What conclusions can you draw about housing conditions in pre-famine Ireland?

4. Study the map of the distribution of the four classes of house types. Do you notice any geographic pattern with regard to each house type? Give particular attention to the distribution of class 4 houses. Where are they found? Where is the highest density?

5. Present this problem for small groups of students to discuss:

   You are part of a team of experts who have been asked to predict the areas of Ireland most likely to suffer in the event of an economic crisis like a famine. Do you think pre-famine housing data can help you form your hypothesis? If so, using the housing data you have examined, predict which areas would be most vulnerable. If you don't think housing data is helpful, explain why and what kind of data you would rely on to make your prediction.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Reflect upon the different types of houses that exist around the world, listing reasons why they were built the way they were.

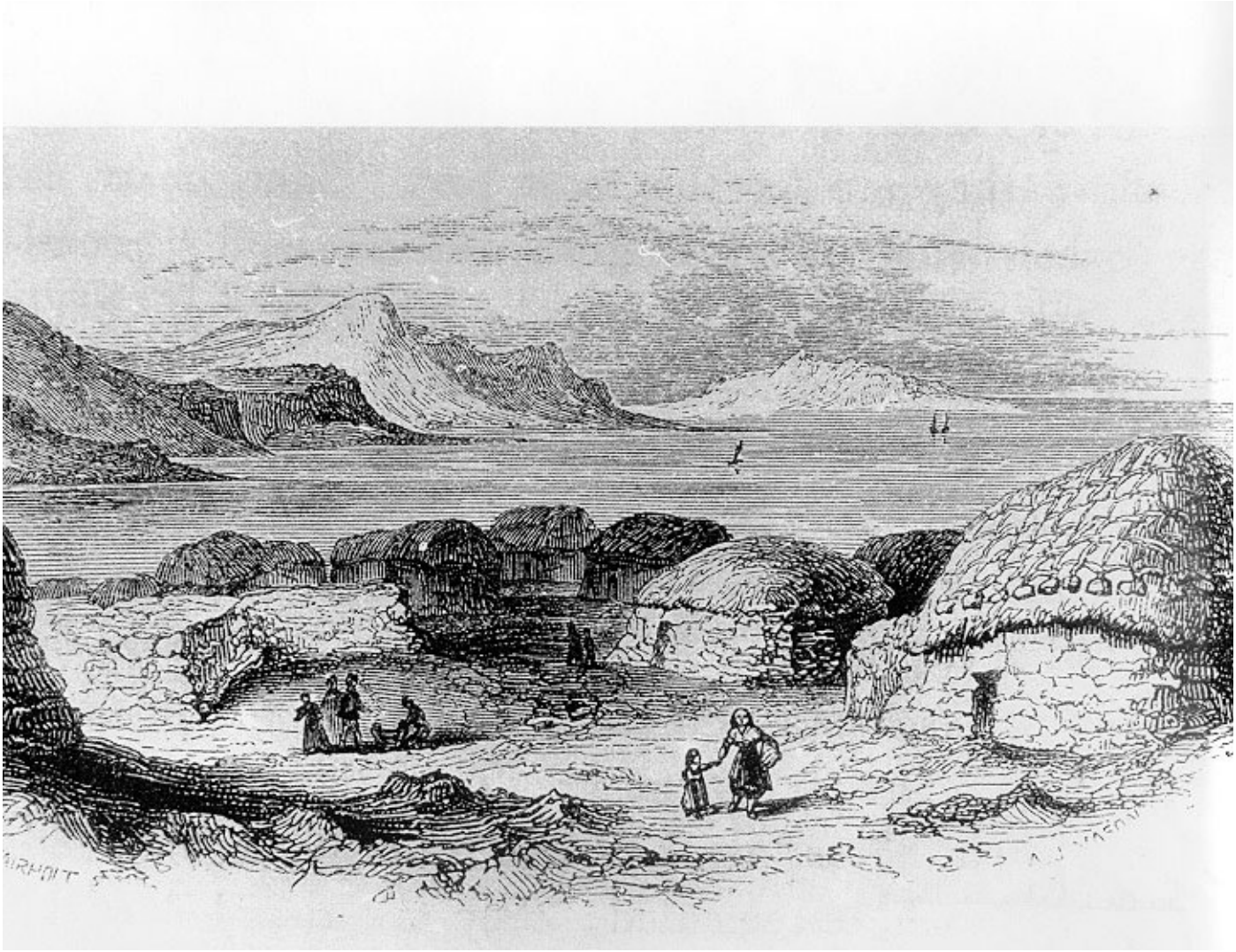
TEACHER REFLECTION

Students might consider whether the type of house one occupies is a reliable measure of wealth. Arthur Young, who toured Ireland in 1778-80 and left us an important record of his impressions, warned his reader that mud houses did not always mean poverty. “Before we can attribute such deficiencies to absolute poverty we must take into account the customs and inclinations of the people.” Some Irish lived in mud houses because any improvements could mean an increase in rent or in taxes. (In the early nineteenth century windows were taxed.) Teachers may want to use this activity with the activity *Travelers in Pre-Famine Ireland.*

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

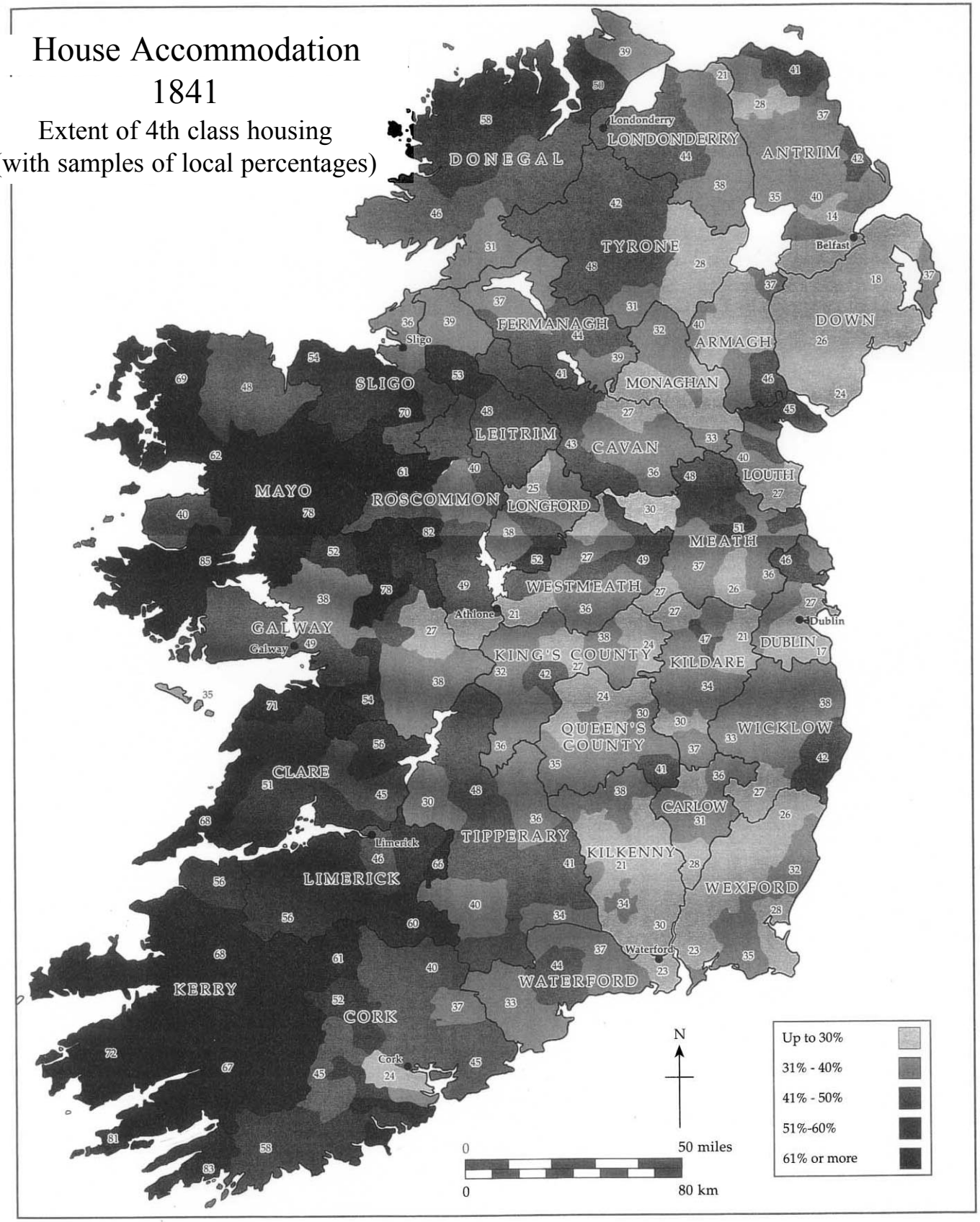
For advanced students:

1. Students might investigate their community to see whether improvements on a house means an increase in property taxes. Do students know any instances where people have decided not to make certain improvements because such improvements would raise taxes?
2. Ask students to read *A Millionaire Next Door* by Thomas J. Stanley and William D. Danko (1996) and share their observations after reading the book.
3. Using the Internet, students can check out the median income of a community and compare it with the property taxes, school taxes, and values of houses and property of that community.



Dooagh, Achill Island

Source: Samuel and Anna Hall. *Ireland: Its Scenery and Character*. London: Hall, 1843.



(**Census of Ireland for the year 1841**, vol. I, plate III; P.P. 1843 (504) XXIV; redrawn by Brian MacDonald

Source: Noel Kissane. *The Irish Famine, A Documentary History*. Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995. pp. 9. Used with permission of the National Library of Ireland. Map drawn by Brian MacDonald. Reprinted with permission of Brian MacDonald.

Pre-Famine Model Landlords

BACKGROUND

This activity focuses on the work of two resident landlords who were committed to improving their estates and the quality of life for their tenants. Refer to the activity *Maria Edgeworth's Analysis of the Famine* for additional information.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Ingenious Mr. Edgeworth

Donegal

Longford

Pre-Famine Agriculture

Pre-Famine Model Landlords

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Aalen, F.H.A., Kevin Whalen and Matthew Stout, eds. *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape.* Cork: Cork University Press, 1997.

Clarke, Desmond. *The Ingenious Mr. Edgeworth.* London: Oldbourne, 1965.

Fraser, James. *A Handbook for Travelers in Ireland*. Dublin: Curry, 1844.

James, Dermot. *John Hamilton of Donegal. 1800-1884. This Recklessly Generous Landlord.* Dublin: Woodfield Press, 1998.

Scally, Robert James. *The End of Hidden Ireland: Rebellion, Famine, and Emigration.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the impact of management practices on rural Ireland.

Compare agricultural practices of pre-famine landlords.

Evaluate maps for better understanding the significance of agricultural land.

STANDARDS

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELA 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 3: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth's surface.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Interpret and analyze documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history.

Study about how people live, work, and utilize natural resources.

Investigate how people depend on and modify the physical environment.

Understand the characteristics, functions, and applications of maps, globes, aerial and other photographs, satellite-produced images, and models.

Investigate why people and places are located where they are and what patterns can be perceived in these locations.

Analyze geographic information by making relationships, interpreting trends and relationships, and analyzing geographic data.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- analytical thinking
- evaluate and connect evidence
- think rationally about content
- ask and answer logical questions
- interpret information and data
- reflect upon content/form opinions
- make generalizations
- identify patterns and themes

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to locate Co. Longford on the map of Ireland and find Edgeworthstown on the map of Longford. There is a description of Edgeworthstown in James Fraser's *A Handbook for Travelers in Ireland* (1844), pp. 437-8:

> *This small and comparatively neat village is surrounded by a great extent of flat bog and tillage in almost regular alternations. The natural bleakness of this district is, however, considerably relieved by the hedgerows of Canadian poplars, which have been planted in greater quantity than in any other part of this division of the kingdom.*
>
> *Edgeworthstown has somewhat the appearance of an English village. The church, chapel, schools, and the cheerful mansion and demense of Edgeworthstown House, F.B. Edgeworth, are all in keeping; and the work of Maria Edgeworth and her talented father will render this place memorable while science and literature are regarded.*

Ask students: What information does Fraser's description of Edgeworthstown provide? What are hedgerows? What is their function? What does the detail about the hedgerows suggest about the district around Edgeworthstown? Do you think that Fraser's comment about Edgeworthstown looking like an English village was meant as a compliment? What did Fraser admire about Edgeworthstown? Does Fraser suggest that the local landlord took some responsibility for the conditions of the land and village?

2. Ask students to read the selection from Desmond Clarke's *The Ingenious Mr. Edgeworth* (see handouts). What steps did Edgeworth take to improve the quality of the agricultural land of his Edgeworthstown estate?

Locate Co. Donegal on the map of Ireland. Gweedore is located near the mouth of the River Clady. Fraser described the region and its landlord Lord George Hill (pp. 573):

> *Lord George Hill, who has lately purchased a large mountain tract in this district, chiefly with*

a view to its improvements, and to ameliorate the conditions of its inhabitants, has also built a large store at Bunbeg, about five miles from the inn, on the shores of Gweedore Bay where the inhabitants are supplied with all the necessities at a fair price; and their corn and other produce purchased at the current prices.

3. Lord George Hill purchased some 23,000 acres around Gweedore, Co. Donegal in 1838. One of the first things he did was to break up the traditional rundale system. Rundale is a method of distributing land so that occupiers in a given area share land of different quality equally. In practical terms it meant that landholders cultivated small, scattered plots of ground. Lord Hill believed there could be no improvement in the condition of tenants in rural Ireland as long as the rundale system existed, and he took measures to eradicate the traditional system of land occupancy in Gweedore.

Ask students to read Asenath Nicholson's description of how Lord George Hill set about replacing the rundale system. How did Hill implement the break-up of the rundale system? Notice that Nicholson recognizes that Lord Hill's plan to consolidate land into larger, more economically viable holdings had its social consequences. What were they?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Look at the 1841 agricultural map (see handouts). It illustrates two factors: the percentage of arable land (land fit for cultivation) and the population density (people per square mile) of each county. What is the significance of each factor? What was the relationship between arable land and density in pre-famine rural Ireland? How does Longford compare with Donegal?

Now look at the location of each county. What influence does location have on agriculture? (Ireland is shaped like a saucer with mountains around the edge and a bog in the center.) Knowing that some of the counties with the highest famine mortality were Clare, Cork, Galway, Kerry, Mayo and Sligo, is there any information about location, percentage of arable land and population density that could have helped to predict which parts of the county would suffer most from an agricultural catastrophe like the potato blight?

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity focuses on the work of two resident landlords who were committed to improving their estates and the quality of life for their tenants. The "Fields" section of the *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape* (pp. 134-144) is a good source of information about field boundaries, hedge management, and rainfall. See also the activity *Maria Edgeworth's Analysis of the Famine*:

This activity demonstrates how agricultural land in rural Ireland could be improved by good management practices and starts with the fact that Richard Lovell Edgeworth and Lord Hill were resident landlords. Many other landlords owned large estates in Ireland but lived abroad, ignored their tenants, neglected their Irish property, and offered no incentive for improvements; indeed, tenants who improved their property were often rewarded with higher rents.

In field tests of the activity, the difference between resident and absentee landlords was a concept that many students heard about from news stories that described absentee landlords failing to provide heat and hot water to tenants or to make essential repairs to their income units. These comments led to the larger question of our obligations to those for whom we are responsible.

Even the work of improving landlords is not without controversy, because part of their plan was to create larger, more viable farms and that involved consolidation of small holdings. Landlords like John Hamilton and Lord Hill did it by breaking up the rundale system; however, as Nicholson points out such "improvements" can change or destroy traditional communities. Certainly this sort of consolidation interrupted some formal and informal land arrangements that survived from older Irish traditions. Landlords and their agents would not have recognized these arrangements as legitimate.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

Given the factors of the percentage of arable land and population density, what is the significance of Edgeworth and Hill's work? Ask students to write an essay comparing Edgeworth and Hill's approach to improving their estates. Did they share the same views about how best to make their estates more efficient? How did they treat their tenants in the process? Students should use information from maps to support their points.

Students may want to read Edgeworth's daughter Maria's novel *Castle Rackrent*, the chronicle of the fall of the Rankrents through three generations; it is a parable of irresponsibility told with transparent irony by the old family servant Thady Quirk. It was the first regional novel, a novel that influenced Sir Walter Scott who said in the General Preface to *Waverly* (1829) that he hoped to do for the Scottish highlander what Edgeworth had done for Irish national character. Students could compare Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* with the way Ivan Turgenev treated the matter of responsibility and irresponsibility of landlords toward serfs in his novels and short stories of Russian life in the nineteenth century. They might also compare Thady with the faithful Dilsey in William Faulkner's American novel *The Sound and the Fury*, that treats failure of responsibility in its account of the degeneration of the Compson family.

The Ingenious Mr. Edgeworth

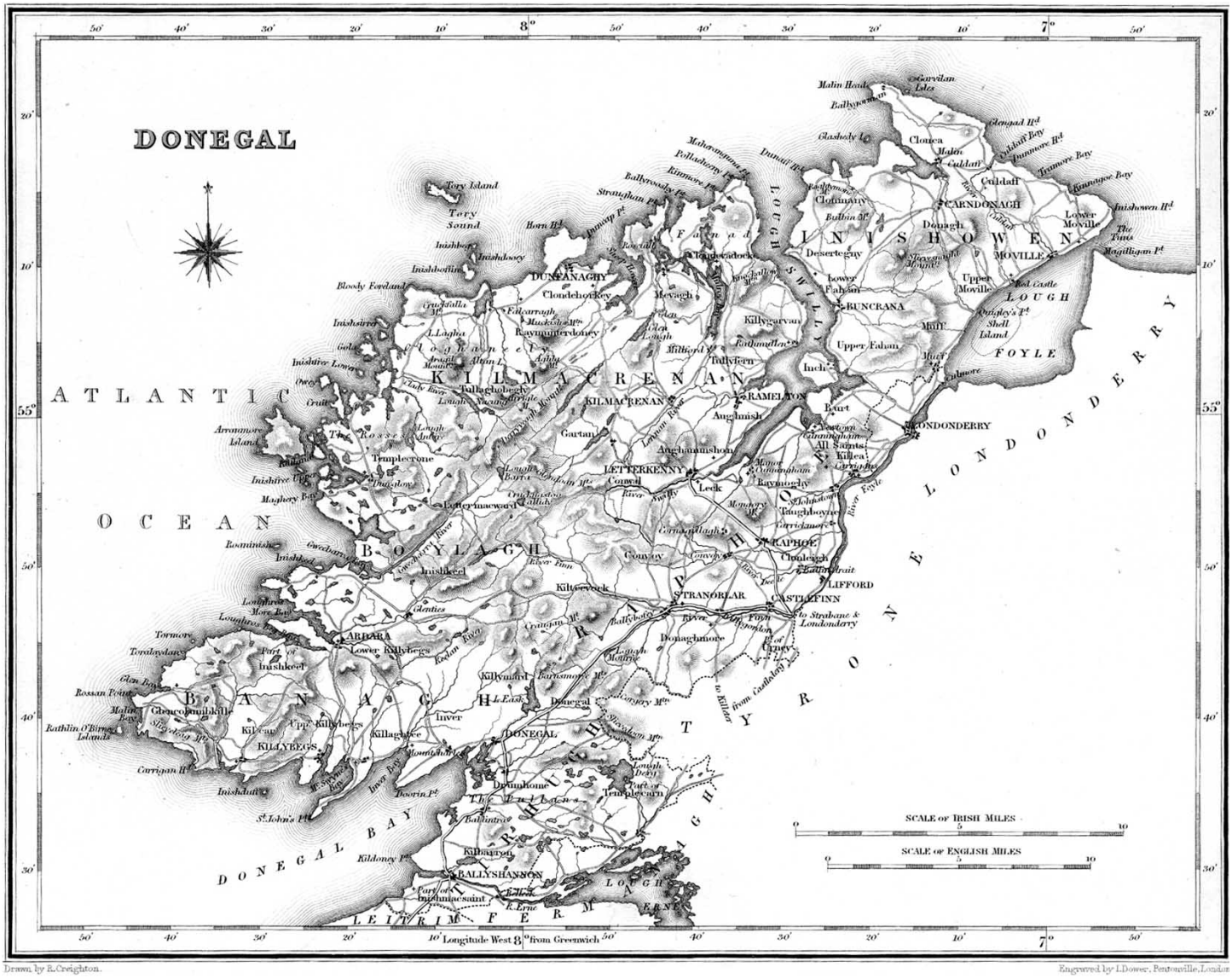
In 1782, Richard Lovell Edgeworth moved from England to the estate in Ireland that he inherited from his father. The estate had been managed by an agent who had allowed it to become neglected. Edgeworth set about making improvements and in doing so became a model of a progressive landlord. Maria, Edgeworth's novelist daughter, became his assistant in managing Edgeworthstown. Edgeworth shared his ideas about social reform with his English friend Thomas Day.

> *He reclaimed large tracts of mountain land and drained many acres of bogland, a project which he enthusiastically wrote about to Day, who was engaged in a somewhat similar venture at Anningsley. He gave considerable employment, and paid, much to the annoyance of his neighboring farmers, a higher agricultural wage than was normal, especially during the winter months when so many laborers were unemployed or meagerly paid.*

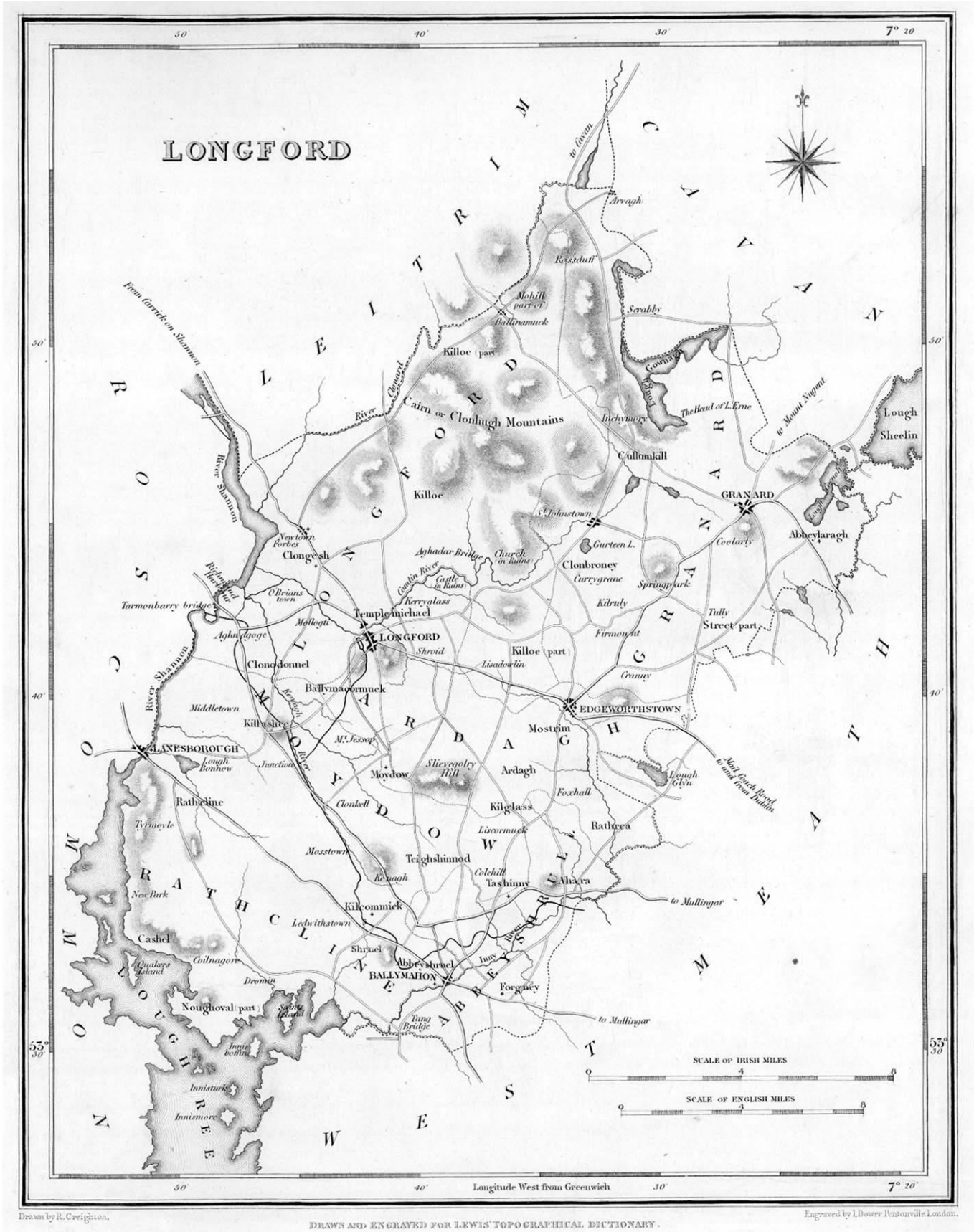
John Curwen, an agricultural specialist who was a member of the British Parliament, visited Edgeworthstown in 1814.

> *Curwen inspected Edgeworth's estate and had some interesting comments to make. "The occupations were larger," he tells us, "and the farming buildings more extensive, than we had hitherto generally met with. Considerable attention is paid to fences but the husbandry was far from perfection. The tenants are to be considered rather as grazing than tillage farmers...The average size of the farm is about one hundred acres, let at about thirty shillings an acre. This seems comparatively moderate. As far as I was able to form a judgement, Mr. Edgeworth has much reason to be proud of his tenantry, who appear substantial and respectable men; everything about their farms seemed to exhibit sufficiency and comfort; and the subsisting friendliness towards them, on their landlord's part, was highly creditable to both."*
>
> *Curwen strongly favoured tillage, and did not approve of the grazing farm, but generally speaking Longford does not lend itself to tillage, and Edgeworth decried the system of breaking up the land into small uneconomic holdings, favouring instead the more substantial tenant to whom he gave good leases at reasonable rents. This provided employment for the cottier who in most other places subsisted on his miserable acre and had little hope of employment outside of harvesting.*

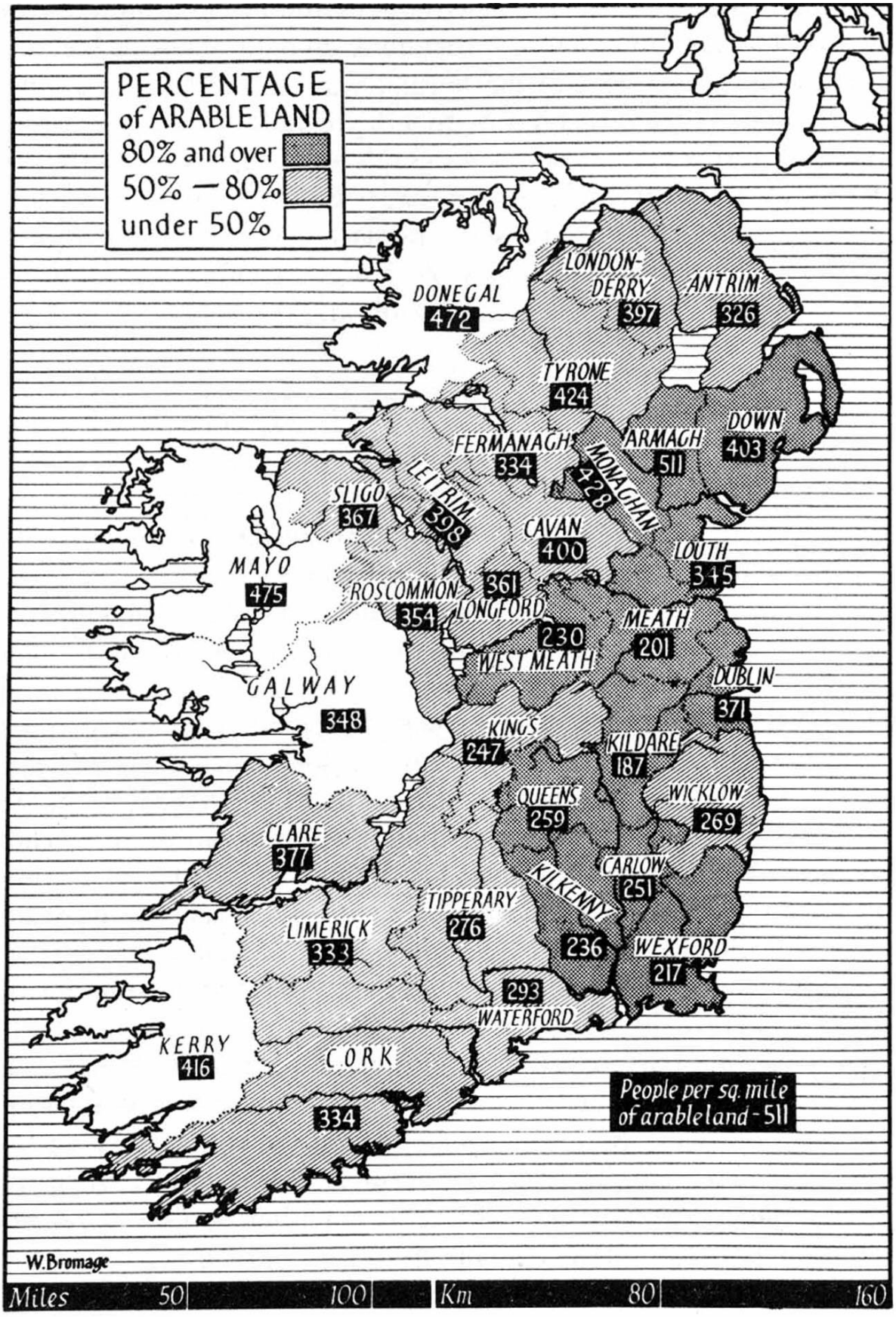
Source: Desmond Clarke. *The Ingenious Mr. Edgeworth*. London: Oldbourne, 1965. pp. 119-120. Permission pending.



Source: Samuel Lewis, Lewis's Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, II.
London: Lewis, 1837.



Source: Samuel Lewis, Lewis's Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, II. London: Lewis, 1837.



Pre-Famine Agricultural Map, 1841

Source: Ruth Dudley Edwards. *An Atlas of Irish History.* London: Metheun, 1981, pp. 180. Fig. 54A. Permission pending.

Pre-Famine Model Landlords

We suppose it would not be believed that in this district, until very lately, fences were altogether unknown. In some instances, a tenant having any part of a townland (no matter how small), had his proportion in thirty or forty different places, and without fences between them. One poor man who had his inheritance in thirty-two places, abandoned them in utter despair of ever being able to make them out.

Source: Lord George Hill. *Facts from Gweedore*. 3rd ed. Dublin: Phillip Dixon Hardy, 1854 (1846), pp. 22.

Asenath Nicholson described how Hill went about consolidating the small holdings.

The next difficult work was to place each tenant on his own farm; and to do this every landholder was served with notice "to quit." A surveyor had drawn maps; the tenants were assembled and the new allotments were made according to his rent. All previous bargains were adjusted to mutual satisfaction, but the final allotments of land took three years to settle. They must look over their new farms all in one piece and cast lots for them. The rundale system, when disturbed, brought new difficulties to these people; it broke up their clusters of huts, and the facilities of assembling nights to tell and hear long stories. They must tumble down their cabins, which were of loose stones. The owner of the cabin hired a fiddler which no sooner known than the joyous Irish are on the spot. Each takes a stone or stones upon his or her back (for women and children are there). They dance at intervals. The fiddler animates them on while the daylight lasts, and then the night is finished by dancing.

Source: Asenath Nicholson. *Annals of the Famine in Ireland.* ed. Maureen Murphy. Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1998. pp. 70.
Used with permission of The Lilliput Press, Dublin, Ireland.

Irish Land Ownership Before the Great Irish Famine

BACKGROUND

Rural Ireland before the Great Irish Famine is often viewed as a society of landlords and tenants, but the social structure was more complicated. In Ireland before the Great Irish Famine there was a complicated system of land ownership and occupancy. In the seventeenth century there was a dramatic change in land ownership from native Irish Catholic to English Protestants. Between 1641 and 1703, the percent of land owned by Catholics dropped from 59 percent to 14 percent (Moody and Martin 201). Some of the new owners came and settled in Ireland and were known as the Anglo-Irish; other owners were absentee landlords who lived abroad and were only interested in the income from their Irish estates. They did not often make improvements on their estates; some seldom even visited their estates. What they did do was to mortgage their estates to raise capital. These landlords tended to give leases to large tenant farmers, some of whom became middlemen. As long as the landlords received their rent promptly, they did not bother much with how the middlemen managed their property. Between the landlord at the top and the landless agricultural laborer (the cottier), there was a middleman or middlemen, so that the laborer saw the small farmer to whom he paid rent, and not the landlord, as the person who controlled the fragile economy of his world.

Middlemen subdivided their land and let out their holdings on short leases to small farmers. They were the men who had the contact with the landlord, and they tended to make the major decisions about agriculture on the local level (Scally 51). Sometimes those decisions led to evictions of small tenant farmers and that created resentment, tension and sometimes violence.

Smaller farmers, who were subtenants, cultivated cash crops like oats and barley that could be sold so that they could pay their rent. The small farmers also subdivided their lands so they could provide for their children when they married.

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *Pre-Famine Model Landlords* and *Pre-Famine Housing Conditions in Ireland.*

(**Note:** This introductory passage will be used as part of a listening exercise for students. See Learning Experience #1 in this activity.)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Before the Bad Times

Landlords and Tenants (2 versions for differentiated instruction)

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Carleton, William. *Valentine M'Clutchy: The Irish Agent*. Dublin: James Duffy, 1848.

Clarke, Aidan. "The Colonization of Ulster and the Rebellion of 1641," in T.W. Moody and F.X. Martin, *The Course of Irish History*. rev. ed. Dublin: Mercier, 1984.

Daly, Mary E. *The Famine in Ireland*. Dundalk: Dublin Historical Association, 1986.

Devon, Lord. "Land Tenure in Ireland," in John Killen, ed. *The Famine Decade.* Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1995. pp. 27-28.

Evans, I. Estyn Evans. *Irish Folk Ways*. New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1957.

Kissane, Noel. *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History*. Dublin: The National Library of Ireland, 1995.

Moody, T. and F.X. Martin, eds. *The Course of Irish History*. rev. ed. Dublin: Mercier Press, 1984.

O'Gráda, Cormac. *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Póirtéir, Cathal. *Famine Echoes.* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1995.

Scally, Robert James. *The End of Hidden Ireland: Rebellion, Famine and Emigration.* New York: Oxford, 1995.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Take and interpret notes.

Explain the relationship between landlords, middlemen, small farmers, and agricultural laborers before the Great Irish Famine.

Draw conclusions based on notes taken from a passage read aloud.

Describe how Irish agricultural laborers lived before the Great Irish Famine.

Hypothesize what could happen in pre-famine Ireland if there were variables in income demands, an increase in population, or further subdivision of small farms.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 3: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth's surface.

SS 4: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms.

ELA 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

ELA 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Investigate the roles and contributions of individuals and groups in relation to key social, political, cultural, and religious practices throughout world history.

Investigate important events and developments in world history by posing analytical questions, selecting relevant data, distinguishing fact from opinion, hypothesizing cause-and-effect relationships, testing these hypotheses, and forming conclusions.

Study about how people live, work, and utilize natural resources.

Investigate how people depend on and modify the physical environment.

Investigate why people and places are located where they are and what patterns can be perceived in these locations.

Know that scarcity requires individuals to make choices and that these choices involve costs.

Explain how societies and nations attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce capital, natural, and human resources.

Analyze, interpret, and evaluate information, ideas, organization, and language from academic and nonacademic texts, such as textbooks and public documents.

Present (in essays, position papers, speeches, and debates) clear analysis of issues, ideas, texts, and experiences, supporting their positions with well-developed arguments.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- evaluate and connect evidence
- observe and conclude
- set up hypotheses
- take and defend positions

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Read the Background section to students, asking them to take notes. Then review the section again by asking students what their notes tell them about land ownership. Ask students: Based on what you know so far, what would be the outcome of such a system? Ask students to hypothesize what could happen if there were variables in income demands, an increase in population, or further subdivision of small farms.
2. While the little farms got smaller and smaller until half of the farms were under five acres, the population increased from 6,801,827 in 1821 to 7,767,401 in 1831 to 8,175,124 in 1841. Ask students to calculate which decade showed the greater population growth. Given the population growth between 1831 and 1841, what growth could we have expected to see in 1851 had there not been a famine?
3. As the demand for land increased with a rising population, people began to move to the marginal land of mountain and bog in the west of Ireland. Farmers further divided their land by a system of *conacre* where agricultural laborers (cottiers) were paid with plots of fertilized ground to cultivate potatoes, rather than paid with wages (O'Gráda 21).

   In 1843 the Earl of Devon chaired a Royal Commission that reported on the land system in Ireland. Lord Devon said that there was much to condemn in the system of conacre but that it was a necessary evil because his (the laborer's) wages were far below the poverty level:

   > *Under ordinary circumstances, the wages of his labor alone will not enable him to purchase food and other necessaries, and to pay even the most moderate rent. It becomes therefore necessary that he should resort to some other means for procuring subsistence, and these can only be found in the occupation of a piece of ground which shall furnish a crop of potatoes for food (Killen 27).*

   If the cottier and his family lived on a diet of potatoes, he could eat and pay his rent. Read the handout aloud or ask students to read the handout of Cathal Póirtéir's *Before the Bad Times*. What had happened to the standard of living of Irish cottiers by the time of the Great Irish Famine? What made their situation precarious? Lazy bed cultivation of potatoes is more labor intensive than it sounds. The potato bed is built along a ridge or line on top of the ground with trenches dug between the ridges. The soil from the trenches is used to build up the potato bed. The lazy bed method keeps the potatoes from getting waterlogged (Evans 143).
4. In his novel, *Valentine M'Clutchy. The Irish Agent* (1848), William Carleton described the three classes of tenants gathered on the day their rents were due to the landlord's agents: large farmers, small farmers and cottiers. Ask students to read the handout *Landlords and Tenants*. All three groups have their rents, but what does paying the rent mean to each group? What details does Carleton give the reader about each group? What can the reader infer about each group from the way they appear? Carleton characterizes the large farmers as bitter, the small farmers as angry and the cottiers as timid. What are the differences in demeanor? Why does Carleton associate a particular demeanor with a particular group? From what students know about the land system, do they think that Carleton's generalizations about character are accurate?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Select one scenario and hypothesize what might happen if:

an absentee landlord raised his rent?

a middleman tried to increase his return on his subdivision?

the population continued to grow?

the average size of small farms declines?

What does your hypothesis suggest? Write a prediction that spells out the relationship between the current condition and its consequences. What actions should be taken?

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity is designed to introduce students to the complexity of land ownership and occupancy in rural Ireland before the Great Irish Famine. Teachers report that the readings provide a human perspective to the quality of the life of an Irish cottier. Carleton's description of the types of tenants was added to give students the opportunity to discuss the impact of one's economic circumstances on one's view of self-esteem and world view.

This is an early example of British imperialism and would be a good bridge to a discussion of imperialism in Africa and Asia.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Students can make a chart or graph that expresses pre-famine population growth. Students can create a three-fold storyboard that visually describes the way land was sub-divided over three generations.

Before the Bad Times

In the hundred years before the coming of the potato blight to Ireland, the use of the potato had spread rapidly and saw other produce, such as butter, grain and meat, gradually disappear from the tables of the poor and become confined to the tables of the better-off or to the export market. Oats had become a cash crop in most of the country as dependence on the potato grew.

The cottier system expanded to the point where one-third of the population was living in one-roomed cabins and the laborers existed on what was basically a potato wage, providing the farmers with cheap labor. On the eve of the Famine there were two to three million cottiers, laborers and their families, many of them living in clustered settlements on previously unpopulated hillsides and poor marginal land, where the spade and lazy-bed cultivation allowed a perilous existence on a diet dominated by potatoes. The land was held under the conacre system and the cottiers could be evicted at will by farmers.

The population explosion had seen rapid growth from one million to over eight million people in 250 years, half of that growth taking place in the 75 years before the Famine.

In 1836 the Poor Inquiry Commission reported that about two and a half million people in Ireland were living in such poverty that relief measures would be needed to help the huge number of landless and destitute in one of the most densely populated countries in the world.

As the population grew, holdings continued to be sub-divided and on the eve of the Famine most Irish farms were small: half of them were less than five acres and in the west of Ireland only a quarter of the farms were five acres or more.

Source: Cathal Poírtéir. “Before the Bad Times.” *Famine Echoes*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillian, 1995, pp. 20.
Used with permission of Gill and Macmillian.

Landlords and Tenants

Here, too, as in every other department of life, all the various grades of poverty and dependence fall into their respective classes. In one place, for instance, might be seen together those more comfortable farmers who were able to meet their engagements, but who labored under the galling conviction, that, however hard and severely industry might put forth its exertions, there was no ultimate expectation of independence—no cheering reflection, that they resided under a landlord who would feel gratified and proud at their progressive prosperity. Alas! it is wonderful how much happiness a bad landlord destroys!

In another place were grouped together men who were still worse off than the former—men, we mean, who were able to meet their engagements, but at the expense of all, or mostly all, that constitutes domestic comfort - who had bad beds, bad food and indifferent clothes. These persons were far more humble in their bearing than the former, took a less prominent situation in the crowd, and seemed to have deeper care and much more personal feeling to repress or combat.

There were other groups farther down in the scale of distress, where embarrassment and struggle told as yet a more painful tale; those who came up with their rent, in full to be sure, but literally racked up from their own private destitution—who were obliged to sell the meal, or oats, or wheat at a ruinous loss, in order to meet the inexorable demands of a merciless and tyrannical agent. Here were all the external evidence of their condition legible by a single look at their persons; they had all herded together, ill clad, fed, timid, broken down, heartless. All these, however, had their rents—had them full and complete in amount.

Source: William Carleton. *Valentine M'Clutchy, the Irish Agent*. Dublin: James Duffy, 1848. pp. 337-338.

Landlords and Tenants

In one place you could see well-off, large farmers who could pay their bills, but who were bitter because they knew no matter how hard they worked that they never would own their land and that their landlord would not take pleasure in how well they were doing with their farms. It is amazing that a bad landlord can destroy the happiness of their tenants.

In another place the small farmers were gathered. They too could pay their bills but at the expense of any little comfort. They had bad beds, ate bad food and wore worn clothes. These men did not look as confident as the large farmers, and they seemed to be worried about things. They were also men who were trying to control their anger about their conditions.

There were other groups worse off than the small farmers. They too were able to come up with their rent, but did so by selling their grain—oats or wheat- at a big loss so that they could meet the demands of the landlord's agent who was rigid, merciless and a bully. You could tell this group by the way they looked: poorly dressed, poorly fed, timid, broken hearted, but they had their rents—in full and complete.

Source: William Carleton. *Valentine M'Clutchy, the Irish Agent*. Dublin: James Duffy, 1848. pp. 337-338.

The Employment Problem in Pre-Famine Ireland

BACKGROUND

There are twenty or more travel accounts written about Ireland just before the Great Irish Famine. Most were written by English visitors, including William Makepeace Thackeray, but continental travelers enjoying the peace and prosperity of the post-Napoleonic wars often came to Ireland. Alexis de Tocqueville visited in 1835, and Johannes Kohl, in 1844. The single American account of Ireland before the Great Irish Famine was written by New Yorker Asenath Nicholson (1792-1855). Schoolteacher, abolitionist, and boardinghouse-keeper, Nicholson traveled to Ireland in 1844 to "personally investigate the condition of the Irish poor."

Nicholson left the usual tourists routes and walked through the roads of the west and southwest. She visited every county except Co. Cavan. Her contacts were almost exclusively with the poor, so her book is a valuable record of rural Ireland—especially of the life of its agricultural laboring class just before the famine. They were the group hit hardest by the Great Irish Famine because they were likely to have depended on the potato as the sole source of food.

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *Itinerant Workers in Ireland Before the Great Irish Famine* and *Travelers in Pre-Famine Ireland.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS:

Letter of Richard Griffith to the Earl of London

ADDITIONAL READINGS:

Daly, Mary E. *The Famine in Ireland.* Dundalk: Dublin Historical Association, 1986.

Kissane, Noel. *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History*. Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995.

Nicholson, Asenath. *Ireland's Welcome to the Stranger*. London: Gilpin, 1847.

O'Gráda, Cormac. *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the conacre system and the economic impact of the shift from a potato-based economy to a cash-based economy.

Examine and describe the problem of unemployment and underemployment in Ireland before the Great Irish Famine.

STANDARDS

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELA 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 4: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Know some ways individuals and groups attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce resources.

Explain how people's wants exceed their limited resources and that this condition defines scarcity.

Study about how the availability and distribution of resources is important to a nation's economic growth.

Understand how societies organize their economies to answer three fundamental economic questions: What goods and services shall be produced and in what quantities? How shall goods and services be produced? For whom shall goods and services be produced?

Investigate how production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of goods and services are economic decisions with which all societies and nations must deal.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- analytical thinking
- interpret information and data
- make generalizations

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Mathematics

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to read the handout of Richard Griffith's letter to the Earl of Lincoln, Commissioner of the Office of Woods and Forests written in the second autumn of the Great Irish Famine. While this activity is about pre-famine Ireland, Griffith's letter explains how *conacre* works. Griffith describes the precarious economy of the agricultural laborer or cottier who worked on a system of conacre. Conacre meant that agricultural laborers were paid in fertilized potato grounds rather than in money wages (O'Gráda 21). How is it that cottiers can mange without money wages? How do they get the essentials that they need? How significant is the number of people living on this system? What does the potato grown on conacre supply to the cottier and his family? Griffith uses the word *dependence* in his letter. On what or whom do the people living on conacre depend?
2. Griffith says cottiers working on the conacre system are employed for part of the year. What happens for the rest of the year? Would we call such laborers unemployed or underemployed? What is the difference? Can students give examples of the difference between unemployed and underemployed? Are the solutions for both groups the same?
3. Many cottiers or agricultural laborers took to the roads looking for seasonal work usually helping with the harvest or saving hay. Some went as far as England to get harvest work. Can students give examples of seasonal workers? What kinds of things do they do? Are there workers today who follow the harvest?
4. In her tour of Ireland in 1844-1845, Asenath Nicholson spoke to many rural people who said they wanted work and there wasn't work to be had. Near Bandon, Co. Cork, she visited a cabin where the women were spinning and noted how unusual it was to find a family gainfully employed.

   Taking a walk far out of town, I went into a miserable cabin, where two women and their two daughters were at their wheels, and a third old woman carding. This was an unusual sight, for seldom had I seen, in Ireland, a whole family employed among the peasantry. Ages of poverty

have taken every thing out of their hands, but preparing and eating the potato; and they sit listlessly upon a stool, lie upon their straw or saunter upon the street because no one hires them (257).

Are there individuals in the United States who would like to work but who cannot find work? Are there some people who are excluded by law from working legally? (Underage teens, undocumented aliens).

5. In her description of the cabin near Bandon, Nicholson describes a household engaged in making cloth-spinning and carding wool. Cottage-based weaving, linen-making and other domestic textile production was, after agriculture, the significant employer in the Irish countryside, and even that was declining before the Great Irish Famine (Daly 12-13).

Ask students to research the steps of *sheep to shawl* when shearing, carding, spinning dyeing, and weaving can result in a beautiful, warm piece of clothing. How much work was involved?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

How would students characterize the families of Irish agricultural laborers or cottiers described by Griffith and Nicholson? Cottier families were largely self-dependent and did not have much of a cash economy. They lived on their potatoes, fed their saleable asset (their pig) on potato scraps and made ends meet with seasonal labor. Women turned wool into cloth for domestic use or for sale.

Write predictions of what would happen if suddenly there was a no potato-based economy and food had to be purchased. What would happen if food were available only to those who could afford to purchase it? How would a cottier and his family manage the shift from self-sufficiency to a cash economy?

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity poses a question about what happened to a one crop economy when that crop fails. Students can investigate where such vulnerable economies exist today. They can also anticipate the situation described by economist and Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, whose research on famines since the Indian famines of the 1940s shows it was not food shortages that were responsible for hunger but the inability of the poor to purchase food.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Discuss the difference between being unemployed and underemployed. What are the pre-employment skills needed for different work environments?

Letter of Richard Griffith to the Earl of Lincoln

Limerick, 18 April 1846.

One-fourth, and in many cases upwards of one-third, of the rural population have no land, or at least less than half an acre which is usually held under a farmer or middleman. These people live chiefly by barter. They rarely have any money transactions, except, perhaps, from the sale of a pig. They are usually employed part of the year by the farmers or neighboring gentlemen. They take from the farmer, on the conacre system, a sufficient quantity of land on which they plant potatoes for their support. If the farmer manures it, the amount charged varies from £5 to £8 per acre; but if the cottier has manure of his own, derived from the pig, scraping the road etc., he is rarely charged any rent for the part so manured. The cottier plants his crop, and works out the rent with the farmer. When unemployed, he has his potatoes to live on, and with the small potatoes he rears and fattens a pig, from the produce of which the family is clothed. Such is the state of dependence of at least one-fourth, or probably one-third of the people.

Source: Noel Kissane. *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History.* Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995.
Used with permission of the author and the National Library of Ireland.

Itinerant Workers in Ireland Before the Great Irish Famine

BACKGROUND

There was hunger among the rural poor even before the Great Irish Famine. There was an earlier famine in 1741 and other years where the crop failed. Even normal years had hungry summer months before the new potato crop was ready to be harvested. How did the poor survive during the hungry months?

In rural Ireland, many men left their homes for part of each year to go as seasonal workers to work the harvest in other places. Itinerant or migrant workers took some pressure off the local economy to provide work for their growing populations, and while the men went off to work, their wives and children often took to the road begging. Travelers to Ireland before the Great Irish Famine often found themselves surrounded by beggars who congregated at coach stops, inns and on the main road. Since travelers often visited during the hungry summer months, they were more likely to meet beggars (O'Gráda 24). While some visitors criticized the poor for preferring begging to work, the better informed travelers knew that the Irish wanted work but there was not enough employment for them.

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *Travelers in Pre-Famine Ireland* and *The Employment Problem in Pre-Famine Ireland.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Peasantry and the Tenantry

Friend of My Heart

Itinerant Laborers

ADDITIONAL READINGS

O'Gráda, Cormac. *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Veneday, J. "The Peasantry and the Tenantry," *The Famine Decade: Contemporary Accounts 1841-1851.* ed. John Killen. Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 1995. pp. 21-23.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the role of itinerant workers in Ireland's history.

Describe the economic role of itinerant workers in the United States.

Explore literature to better understand social history.

Write a poem to one of the tools of trade.

Write tributes to student tools or the tools of craftspeople.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas,

SS 4: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms.

ELA 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Analyze the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, and religious practices and activities.

View history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments in world history by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents.

Develop conclusions about economic issues and problems by creating broad statements which summarize findings and solutions.

Interpret and analyze complex informational texts and presentations, including primary source materials, in their subject area courses.

Use a combination of techniques to extract salient information from texts.

Make perceptive and well developed connections to prior knowledge.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- draw conclusions
- probe assumptions for accuracy and viewpoints
- reflect upon content/form opinions
- consult and interpret primary sources

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to look at the illustration of Irish itinerant laborers (see handouts). What do they notice? The spade with a blade on just one side is known as a *loy*. Explain the role of the *migrant* or *itinerant* workers.
2. Ask students to read the handout *The Peasantry and the Tenantry*. Does Veneday believe the Irish are idle? Why are they called idlers? (Discuss the word *calumny*.) According to Veneday, how do the Irish behave on the job when they have to work? Are there individuals looking for work today who are called lazy or idle by people who do not understand that they are trying to find employment? What do students believe governments should do about chronic unemployment? Ask students to predict what chronic seasonal unemployment would mean when Ireland experienced four failures of the potato crop in five years.
3. Historians know something about one such wandering laborer or *spailpín fanach,* [SPAHL-peen FAWN-ach]. The poet Eoghan Rua O'Suilleabháin [Owen Roe O'Sullivan], a fine eighteenth century Irish poet, was a wandering laborer who walked from his native Co. Kerry to work the harvest as far away as Co. Galway. He once asked a blacksmith named Séamus to make him a new spade. O'Suilleabháin calls Séamus a Geraldine because his last name was Fitzgerald. (*Geraldine* was a term of reference for the Fitzgerald family that plays on the Gerald part of the name.)

   Students should read Joan Keefe's translation of O'Suilleabháin's poem, "Friend of my Heart." One of the marks of a good poet of the time was the use of classical literature: the Old Testament, Greek, Latin

and Old Irish. The Fenians were a band of Irish warriors. Deirdre was the heroine of a tragic story in Early Irish literature. What details does O'Suilleabháin give about the life of a *spailpín fanach*? Do students think that O'Suilleabháin went on the road because he had a search for adventure or was there another reason? Does O'Suilleabháin make life on the road sound attractive? Would students like to live the life of an itinerant laborer?

O'Suilleabháin was a poet and storyteller as well as a laborer. When his boss criticized his work, O'Suilleabháin answered with a story. What kind of stories did he tell?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Write a tribute (either prose or poetry) to the tools of a trade, addressed to the craftspeople who use them or manufacturers who make them. They could be tools students use for study, for work, for school activities or for hobbies. What are the features they look for in their tools? Describe them. How do their tools help them accomplish their tasks? How valuable are their tools? Do they have sentimental value, such as a special pen or marker given by a friend, or a tool that was used by an ancestor? How would they feel if the tool was lost or stolen?

TEACHER REFLECTION

It is important to make a distinction between itinerant workers and the group of Irish people known as travelers or traveling people, who were formerly known as itinerants. (They were also called tinkers because they mended pots and dealt in scrap metal.) Up until the 1970s, travelers moved around Ireland in colorful, horse-drawn carts and camped in groups along the roadside. Certain families of travelers were generally associated with a particular county or region. Since the 1970s, travelers have shifted to caravans (trailers).

The Irish have encouraged the travelers to settle in one place and send their children to school. This has involved designating *halting sites* for travelers who would like to settle in one place. Communities have not always been successful in creating halting sites because residents resist establishing such sites in their neighborhoods.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

Research the lives of migrant workers in America today. Do they have to leave home during certain seasons to find work? Why? Do we have migrant workers in New York State? Where do they work? Which months? What happens to their families? What does state or local government do to help migrant workers? What kind of regulations protect the migrant worker? Are there students in your school who are children of migrant workers? Talk to them about the challenges of their lives, as well as the positive side of traveling to work sites.

This is an opportunity to make the connection between nineteenth century itinerant workers and modern migrant workers in America and others abroad (e.g., Indians who work in the Arabian Gulf countries).

The Peasantry and Tenantry

There are a great many *idlers* in Ireland. That is a fact which no one will attempt to deny. It is the greatest of all misfortunes of Ireland, and it is one that consumes the very marrow of the country. Idleness, it may be affirmed, is the very flesh and blood of many Irishmen. They have actually learned how to be idle, and the habit is so easily acquired—there is so much of gentleness, and, we might add, of nobility, in the practice of it!

And yet, with all this, it is a calumny to say of the Irish that they are so *slothful*. They have, in truth, nothing to do, and they are of the opinion "…when nought is to be done, there is no use in hurrying." For centuries, they have had nothing to do, and so the *far niente* has become a habit. This is, beyond all others, the greatest misfortune of Ireland; because whenever the Irishman has really got anything to do, he is untiringly diligent—so diligent, that he far surpasses the Englishman himself. The noble-hearted Sadlier, indignant at the accusation of "idleness" against the Irish, says, "They cannot find employment, and therefore are they branded with the crime of idleness. It is false. In our harvest fields, on our farms, in the bowels of the earth, or on the highest buildings, wherever employment can be procured, no matter how dangerous or how difficult it may be, there the Irish are sure to be found…."

Source: J. Veneday. "The Peasantry and Tenantry," *The Famine Decade: Contemporary Accounts 1841-1851*. ed., John Killen. Belfast: The Blackstaff Press. pp. 21-22. Reprinted by permission of The Blackstaff Press.

Friend of My Heart

Friend of my heart, Séamus, loving and witty,
Of Geraldine blood, Greek-tinged and poetic,
Make me a clean smooth handle to fit my spade
And add a nice crook as a crowning elegance.

Then I'll shoulder my tool and go on my way
Since my thirst for adventure has not been quenched
Without stop with my spade as far off as Galway
Where daily my pay will be breakfast and sixpence.

Before the day's end if my tired bones give out
And the steward says my grip of the spade is in doubt,
Then calmly I will tell him of the adventure of death
And of classical battles that left heroes weak.

Of Samson and high deeds I will talk for a while,
Of strong Alexander eager for enemies,
Of the Caesars' dictatorship, powerful and wise,
Or of Achilles who left many dead in the field.

Or the fall of the Fenians with terrible slaughter,
And the heartbreaking story of ravishing Deirdre.
And then with sweet coaxing I will sing songs,
An account of my day you have there now, Séamus.

After my labor I'll take my pay in a lump
And tie it with hemp in the breast of my shirt,
Still with a high heart I will head for home,
Not parting with sixpence till I come to your forge.

You are a man like me tormented with thirst,
So we will briskly set off for the inn down the road,
Ale and drams I will order to be arrayed on the table
And no ha'penny of hard-earned money will be spared.

Eoghan Rua O'Suilleabháin

Source: Eoghan Rua O'Suilleabháin. "Friend of My Heart," trans. from Irish by Joan Keefe, *Irish Literature: A Reader*. eds. Maureen Murphy and James MacKillop, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987. pp. 48-49.
Used with permission of Syracuse University Press.

A Group of Spademen Waiting to be Hired

Attributed to Samson Towgood Roche (1759-1847), painted in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, Ireland pre-1824.

Source: Reprinted with permission of the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum, Co. Down, Northern Ireland.

Food Shortages Before the Great Irish Famine

BACKGROUND

This activity addresses an instance of food shortage and hunger *before* the Great Irish Famine. It introduces students to attempts by some unscrupulous people to profit from want. Students may be familiar with the idea that when things are scarce, prices go up. In this case, the writers of the handouts in this activity suggest that some farmers were engaged in manipulating the supply of potatoes, and they and middlemen were able to get higher prices.

The poor of Galway called on farmers to sell their potatoes directly rather than through middlemen such as hucksters (small shopkeepers) and forestallers who would raise the prices. Hucksters are retailers of small goods in shops or booths. The term is also used derisively to describe a person who is ready to make a profit in a mean or petty way. A forestaller is someone who intercepts goods before they reach the public market with the motive of enhancing the price, or one who buys goods privately with a view to enhancing the price. The poor resented the middlemen who started as hucksters (a small shopkeeper), became very prosperous, and then took advantage of poor people by extending them credit or making loans at high rates of interest. Such men were called *gombeens* and were intensely disliked.

That the Irish exploited other Irish in a time where food was scarce and there was danger of starvation is an uncomfortable idea for people who would rather see a unified people struggling against an absentee or irresponsible landlord class, and an indifferent or hostile government that let food leave the country. Debate continues today about the causes of the Great Irish Famine and the responsibility government and others bear for the suffering of the poor. See the activities *Why Was There a Famine in the 1840s*? and *Causes of the Great Irish Famine.*

Teachers also may want to refer to the activities *"Nothing to Eat": Under the Hawthorne Tree* and *What do we know about Hunger?*

(**Note:** The Claddagh [CLAH-dah] was a fishing village across the river from the town of Galway. Most people who are familiar with Claddagh know it as the name of a traditional gold ring which features a heart held by two hands.)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Galway Starvation Riots

John Hynes

Attack on a Potato Store

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Eiríksson, Andres. "Food Supply and Food Riot," in Cormac O'Gráda. ed. *Famine 150. Commemorative Lecture Series.* Dublin: Teagasc/UCD, 1997. pp. 67-91.

Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*. NY: Knopf, 1999.

STUDENTS LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Take and interpret notes.

Describe the impact of food shortages prior to the Great Irish Famine.

Create a poem describing a *miser* in Liam O'Flaherty's *Famine.*

Compare viewpoints on the definition and causes of famine.

Comprehend the economics and impact of employing a *middleman* during times of scarcity.

Describe how drawings represent historical events.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 4: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms.

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELA 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Analyze historic events from around the world by examining accounts written from different perspectives.

Analyze changing and competing interpretations of issues, events, and developments throughout world history.

Analyze evidence critically and demonstrate an understanding of how circumstances of time and place influence perspective.

Explain how societies and nations attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce capital, natural and human resources.

Understand how scarcity requires people and nations to make choices which involve costs and future considerations.

Interpret and analyze information from textbooks and nonfiction books for young adults, as well as reference materials, audio and media presentations, oral interviews, graphs, charts, diagrams, and electronic databases intended for a general audience.

Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information and between fact and fiction.

Write poems that observe the conventions of the genre and contain interesting and effective language and voice.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- observe and conclude
- probe ideas and assumptions
- reflective thinking
- draw conclusions
- think rationally about content
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- ask and answer logical questions
- question arguments
- consult and interpret primary sources

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to jot down a description of what is happening in the engraving *Attack on a Potato Store* (see handouts). Then ask students to listen to a reading of the passage *The Galway Starvation Riots* (see handouts) and take notes. Students can listen to the passage a second time, correcting and adding to notes. Students then compare their notes with a partner, and working together, they should write a paragraph that describes the main idea of the article.

   What is the problem in Galway?

   According to the writer, who is responsible for the trouble?

   What details does the writer give to support his case?

   How does the engraving tie to the *Galway Starvation*?

   The writer suggests that some farmers are taking advantage of the potato scarcity to raise the prices. What strategy did they use to push up the prices?

   What action did the local magistrates take in Galway?

   Does the writer of the article approve of their action?

   If students were magistrates and called upon to account for their actions what would they say?

2. The attitude of the writer toward his/her subject of reader is called *tone*.

   What is the writer's tone in this account?

   What is the writer's attitude toward the reader?

   How does the writer want to make the reader feel about the poor in Galway? How does the tone of the article relate to the illustration?

3. What does the writer believe will bring an end to the potato shortage? Why does the writer believe there is "every reason to rely on Providence?" There were food shortages, even famines, before the Great Irish Famine, but hungry times were over with the next harvest. What made the Great Irish Famine so catastrophic was that the potato crop failed four times in five years between 1845-1849.

4. In his novel, *Famine*, Liam O'Flaherty has a particularly loathsome shopkeeper who exploits the poor during the famine. Ask students to read his description of John Hynes. Have students ever met anyone like Hynes? What words would they use to describe an informer? Would they consider them loathsome? What images are especially vivid? What features does O'Flaherty emphasize in his description? What details are effective in O'Flaherty's description? Describing Hynes, O'Flaherty said "He had the face of a miser." Ask students to write down what the face of a miser looks like to them, and turn their images into a miser poem, perhaps a haiku:

   The quick ferret glance
   in the eyes of a miser
   fumbling in the till

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Amartya Sen, the winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1998, has argued that famines are not the result of food shortages per se, but that they occur when there is limited or no access to food. Does the Galway Starvation of 1842 meet Sen's criteria? Explain your position using examples from the handout *The Galway Starvation Riots.*

TEACHER REFLECTION

In 1842, the food scarcity conditions met Sen's criteria (see Assessment Option). During the Great Irish Famine, however, there were actual food shortages in addition to problems of access or economic empowerment. Even had no food left the country, there would have been a serious shortfall without the potato crop.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

Have there ever been any food shortages in the United States? Choose a specific time period (e.g., during the Civil War or World War II, westward expansion, or early 1700s) and determine if there were food shortages. Discuss the causes and reactions, and compare the shortages to Ireland in the early 1800s.

Can you think of times when people in the United States have taken advantage of their fellow citizens? For example, when Hurricane Andrew hit southern Florida, some people from other states drove to Florida to fix buildings for outrageous prices. People were desperate, so they had to pay. Can you think of other examples? How can people be protected from opportunists?

The Galway Starvation Riots

The foregoing illustration is intended to convey an idea of the state of depression to which the poor of Galway have been reduced by the present calamitous season of starvation; and although according to present appearances there is every reason to rely on the goodness of Providence for an abundant and early relief, yet it is calculated that more than another month of suffering and privation must elapse before succor arrives.

The scene represented above is an attack upon a potato store in the town of Galway, on the 13th of the present month, when the distress had become too great for the poor squalid and unpitied inhabitants to endure their misery any longer, without some more substantial alleviation than prospects of a coming harvest; and their resource in this case was to break open the potato store and distribute its contents, without much discrimination, among the plunderers, and to attack the mills where oatmeal was known to be stored.

During the entire of that day the town was in the possession of a fierce and ungovernable mob, led on apparently by women and children, but having an imposing reserve in the rear of the Claddagh fishermen. The Sheriff, with a strong force of police and of the 30th Regiment, which constitute the garrison, vainly attempted to restrain them. They assailed him and his armed bands with showers of stones, which wounded the commanding officer of the military party in the head, and hurt several of the men. But with single forbearance and humanity, the gallant Thirtieth held their fire, and as it was impossible to disperse such a mob without firing amongst them, the millers were induced to promise that meal should be retailed on the following morning at 15d [pence] a stone.

The discontent of the sufferers had been aggravated by the unfeeling and, there was some reason to suspect, the dishonest artifices of those who had food to sell. Farmers, known to have abundant supplies of potatoes, had not only refused to part with any portion of them at the present high prices, but had actually sent into the markets and made purchases, in order to augment the scarcity. Numbers of dealers also, speculating on the rise, had stored quantities of provisions, which they refused to give out at a fair profit; and in several instances these persons had cleared out the markets the instant they were opened, and left the poor famishing housekeepers, with their money in their hands, in the midst of apparent plenty, unable to procure even the supply of a single day.

To this cause is to be attributed the various disturbances which occurred at Loughrea and Galway; the people insisting upon the farmers retailing provisions to them out of the sack, instead of disposing of its contents wholesale to hucksters and forestallers; and the magistrates generally, with proper discretion and humanity, enforcing the reasonable demands of the people.

Notes: The Claddagh [CLAH-dah] was a fishing village across the river from the town of Galway. (Most people who are familiar with the name Claddagh know it as the name of a traditional gold ring which features a heart held by two hands.)

15d/stone would be 15 pence for 14 pounds of meal.

Hucksters sold small goods in little shops, stalls or booths. A huckster can also be a peddlar or hawker of goods.

A forestaller is one buys goods before they reach the market with the intention of selling them at a higher profit.

Magistrates are civil officers with the responsibility for hearing criminal cases in their districts.

Source: "The Galway Starvation Riots," *The Illustrated London News,* June 25, 1842, pp.100.

John Hynes

The Irish have a special loathing for informers, and the name of an informer carries down through generations. John's father had given information to the police about one of the secret societies in the district and was murdered for this transgression in 1799.

He was now standing behind the counter in his shop, reading out from a list what was due to each person for the oats he had bought and which were now stacked in his shed at the rear. His wife stood beside him, handing over the money from the till. The people crowded up on the other side of the counter.

Hynes had now reached his sixtieth year and he looked much older owing to the hardships he had suffered as a child. He was tall, lean and very stooped. He had the face of a miser. He wore a black, slouch hat, with a low crown and a wide brim. It was drawn down over his brow, concealing his eyes, except to raise his head suddenly to look at the person with whom he was dealing. Then two small grey eyes appeared, hostile, foxy and suspicious. His thin lips turned inwards. He had sallow cheeks and a hooked nose. Except for his starched white shirt and his black cravat, his clothes were very shabby, made of grey frieze (coarse wool). He held his withered right hand close to his side like a man carrying a parcel. It was curious the way he started spasmodically when anyone raised his voice to argue with him, as if he expected a blow or insult. This was undoubtedly a relic of his youth, when the country children used to follow his donkey through the lane, pelting him with stones and crying: "Ho! Look at the informers. The curse of God is on them."

Source: Liam O'Flaherty. *Famine*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press,1984 [1937], pp. 80-81.
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IRELAND.

ATTACK ON A POTATO STORE.

Source: The Illustrated London News, June 25, 1842, p. 100.
Maureen Murphy. Great Irish Famine Curriculum Committee. Private collection.

Travelers in Pre-Famine Ireland

BACKGROUND

The accounts of travelers often provide useful insights into cultures, and the impressions of visitors to Ireland in the decade before the Great Irish Famine are no exception. The end of the Napoleonic Wars, improvements in travel, an increase in literacy, and an interested reading public encouraged travelers to visit Ireland and to record their impressions. This activity will add the accounts of travelers to other information that students have examined about life in Ireland before the Great Irish Famine (see Clusters of Activities in the beginning of this curriculum).

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Ireland before the Great Irish Famine: An Economic Overview

Conversation between Mr. Senior and Mr. Revans (2 versions for differentiated instruction)

Alexis de Tocqueville's Observations

A German Visitor to Ireland in 1842 (2 versions for differentiated instruction)

Irish Reports about Conditions of the Poor (3 versions for differentiated instruction)

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Douglass, Frederick. *My Bondage and My Freedom.* New York Dover, 1969 (1855).

Flanagan, Thomas. *The Irish Novelists 1800-1850.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1958.

Kohl, J.G. *Travels in Ireland.* Translated from German. London: Bruce and Wyld, 1844.

Hodges, Graham Russell and Alan Edward Brown, eds., *"Pretend to be Free:" Runaway Slave Advertisements for Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey*. New York: Garland Press, 1994.

Larkin, Emmet, ed. and trans. *Alexis de Tocqueville's Journey in Ireland July-August, 1835*. Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1990.

Maxwell, Constantia. *The Stranger in Ireland*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1954.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe and compare impressions of Ireland made by French and German travelers.

Describe Irish land use and economic development.

Describe the impressions of travelers to Ireland of the conditions of the poor before the Great Irish Famine.

Compare the impressions of foreign travelers to the Irish census data and other information.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 3: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national and global—including the distribution of people, places and environments over the Earth's surface.

SS 4: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms.

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELA 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Interpret and analyze complex informational texts, including primary sources.

Make perceptive and well developed connections to prior knowledge.

Include relevant information and exclude extraneous material.

Present a controlling idea that conveys an individual perspective and insight into the topic.

View history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments in world history by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents.

Investigate important events and developments in world history by posing analytical questions, selecting relevant data, distinguishing fact from opinion, hypothesizing cause-and-effect relationships, testing these hypotheses, and forming conclusions.

Analyze different interpretations of important events, issues, or developments in world history by studying the social, political, and economic context in which they were developed; by testing the data source for reliability and validity, credibility, authority, authenticity, and completeness; and by detecting bias, distortion of the facts, and propaganda by omission, suppression or invention of facts.

Describe the relationships between people and environments and the connections between people and places.

Ask geographic questions about where places are located; why they are where they are; what is important about their locations; and how their locations are related to the location of other people and places.

Analyze geographic information by making relationships, interpreting trends and relationships, and analyzing geographic data.

Collect economic information from primary and secondary sources.

Develop conclusions about economic issues and problems by creating broad statements which summarize findings and solutions.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- ask and answer logical questions
- reflect upon content
- consult and interpret primary sources

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

Mathematics

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Individually, or as a class activity, students can read the handout *Ireland Before the Great Irish Famine: An Economic Overview.* Ask students to graph the information. Ask students to write three observations

about land use in Ireland. Share observations. How did agricultural conditions differ in England and in France? Based on the observations of students, and by looking at agricultural productivity for England and France, do students think there is any cause for concern about the Irish economy? Which factors seem worrisome? If students were to visit an Irish farmer living on one to five acres, what questions would they ask the farmer?

2. Ask students if they have ever visited another city, state or region of the United States. Have they ever visited another country? Ask students to share their impressions. In their opinion, can their observations based on their visits be considered expert testimony on life in the place that they visited? Why? What makes their observations reliable or limited in their reliability? How did travel increase their understanding of their world and themselves?

How about the view of students about the city, town, village or neighborhood where they live? How much do they know about their own locales? If they wanted to find out more information about their locale, what sources would they consult if they wanted to learn something more about local conditions? Whose judgement would they trust? Why?

3. In 1831-32, two French noblemen, Alexis de Tocqueville and his friend Gustave de Beaumont, spent nine months in the United States and wrote a study of the prison system. It was the political system however, that interested de Tocqueville and he began work on *Democracy in America* (1835), a book that became a classic in the literature of American politics. While de Tocqueville was finishing *Democracy in America*, he visited Ireland with de Beaumont to learn more about the relationship between Britain and Ireland. He was interested in the reasons for Ireland's poverty. His journal of his visit is a valued view of Ireland before the Great Irish Famine by an intelligent and alert observer. The journal includes notes of conversations de Tocqueville had with local officials and experts like Nassau Senior, Professor of Economics at Oxford and John Revans, secretary of the Irish Poor Law Commission.

Ask students to read the conversation de Tocqueville witnessed between Nassau Senior and John Revans (see handouts). Revans had been working with a government commission to gather information about conditions of the poor in Ireland. What does he say is the cause of poverty in Ireland? If students had a house or an apartment to rent and noticed the tenant had made improvements to the property at his/her own expense, what would the student/owner say? Two possibilities are:

> **A)** The tenant takes pride in the property and has invested some money in making some improvements to make the place look nice. A good tenant is an asset and I will keep that in mind when it comes time to adjust the rent.
>
> **B)** If the tenant has enough money to make small improvements in the place, then the tenant can pay me more rent. When it comes time to adjust the rent I will raise it.

What response (**A** or **B**) did Revans say Irish landlords had to those tenants who worked to improve their holdings? Given the landlord's response, what did Revans say the tenants did? How would students respond if they were in the tenant's situation?

Revans says the Irish have children because they try to forget the future. For the Irish, their children *were* their future. They would care for the older generation.

How does Revans' analysis of Irish poverty relate to the economic profile in *Ireland Before the Great Irish Famine: An Economic Overview?*

What do students think of the kind of questions that Nassau Senior asks John Revans? What do they think Senior thinks of the Irish? Does a question about their morality suggest he thinks they are an inferior group? How does Revans characterize the Irish? Would students consider theft of food by the hungry a crime? (See the activity *Stealing Food: A Crime or a Failure of the System?*)

4. Revans says it is difficult to get the truth from the Irish. Revans does not say that the Irish lie, but that it is difficult to get the truth. What does he mean? In his notes to the Senior/Revans conversation, de Tocqueville wrote, "This has been at all times the vice of the wretched and slaves." Do students agree? Why do people lie or why are they evasive? Why are people told **not** to lie?

5. Senior's questions about party are important because they indicate that religion and politics separate Irish tenants from their landlords. Ask students if that sounds like a formula for trouble. According to Revans, the tenants also believe the government favors the landlords over the tenants. Does this explain why, beyond economics, the tenants feel oppressed? If people feel oppressed, will they believe that the justice system will treat them fairly?

What do students think about Senior's last question? As Professor of Economics at Oxford, chances are that Senior would be consulted about the government's economic policy. If he believes that the Irish are an inferior race, how will that influence the kind of economic advice he might give the government about Ireland?

Write a newspaper account of the conversation between Senior and Revans.

6. During de Tocqueville's tour, he made his own observations about the condition of the countryside. Ask a student to read de Tocqueville's Observations. What did he find in the Irish countryside?

7. The German traveler Johann Georg Kohl visited Ireland in 1842. Like de Tocqueville, he was a well-traveled man. Ask students to read the handout *A German Visitor to Ireland in 1842.* What did he say about the living conditions of the Irish tenants? Kohl quotes Edmund Spenser's *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1596). How did Kohl think conditions compared with Spenser's account written nearly 250 years earlier?

Kohl visited Russia and compares conditions of the Irish tenant with those of a Russian or Polish serf. Who fares better? Ask students to distinguish between a serf and a slave. As far as Kohl is concerned, what is the difference between the life of a slave or serf and the life of an Irish tenant?

While conditions of Russian serfs and Irish tenants may have seemed similar to that of slaves (from the perspective of Irish travelers), the American Abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who himself had been a slave, said there was no similarity:

> *It is often said, by the opponents of the anti-slavery cause, that the "condition" of the people of Ireland is more deplorable than that of the American slave. Far be it for me to underate the suffering of the Irish people. They have been long oppressed; in the same heart that prompts me to plead the cause of the American bondman, makes it impossible for me not to sympathize with the oppressed of all lands. Yet I must say that there is no analogy between the two cases.*
>
> *The Irish man is poor, but he is not a slave. He may be in rags, but he is not a slave. He is still the master of his body, and can say with the poet, 'the hand of Douglass is his own.'*
>
> *The shame and scandal of kidnapping will long remain wholly monopolized by the American Congress. The Irishman has not only the liberty to emigrate from his country, but he has liberty at home. He can write, and speak, and cooperate for the attainment of his rights and the redress of his wrong.*

How does Frederick Douglass answer those who argued that the condition of the Irish poor was worse than that of the American slave?

How does Douglass distinguish between poverty and slavery?

What rights did the Irish have that were denied American slaves?

Douglas refers to the "shame and scandal of kidnapping." Douglass himself was a fugitive or runaway slave. He was liable for prosecution under the law that regarded him as the property of his owner. Newspapers of the times carried notices of runaway slaves that offered rewards for their capture. Students might examine some of those notices paying particular attention to the descriptions of the fugitive slaves. The descriptions often provide evidence of the way the slave was treated: scars from beatings, lost limbs, malnutrition. The Irish poor, however hungry and ragged, were never subject to such physical degradation.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

While foreign visitors were writing their impressions of the Irish poor, the government was conducting its own investigation about their conditions. Read the handout *Irish Reports about the Condition of the Poor* and compare the travelers' impressions with the government reports.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Social Studies teachers used this activity to review concepts like poverty, prosperity, justice, injustice and oppression. This activity can be used with others that treat the subject of economic conditions in Ireland before the Great Irish Famine: *Pre-Famine Housing Conditions in Ireland; Pre-Famine Model Landlords; Irish Landowners Before the Great Irish Famine; The Employment Problem; Itinerant Workers in Ireland Before the Great Irish Famine; View of Economists;* and *Emigration from Ireland Before the Great Irish Famine.*

This activity has worked well in connection with taking a field trip to Ellis Island. Students were asked to make their own journals of the experience and to share impressions. It is an opportunity to reflect about how experiences and interests shape what we observe when we travel.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Students can create graphic representations of the observations of the travelers, or they can make a series of postcards that de Tocqueville and/or Kohl could send to their friends at home.

Ireland before the Great Irish Famine: An Economic Overview

According to the 1841 census:

* Out of a population of more than 8 million people, 5.5 million people (about two-thirds) depended on agriculture for their livelihoods.

* Most people lived on small plots of land which they rented. They just managed to survive economically.

* Forty-five percent of the little farms were between one and five acres. Only seven percent of the farms were more than 30 acres.

* Many areas of Ireland were densely populated. There were more than 200 people per square mile of arable land, land capable of supporting farming.

* Some areas had especially high population density. Armagh had 511 people per square mile. Many of Mayo's 475 people per square mile lived in inhospitable conditions on poor, infertile land.

* England, by comparison, had only half as many people involved in agriculture, but they produced twice as much per family unit. Agricultural output was similar in Ireland and France but French farms had to support 40% fewer people with that output.

Source: Alan Singer. *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum* Committee.

Conversation between Mr. Senior and Mr. Revans

Alexis de Tocqueville and Gustave de Beaumont visited England before they went to Ireland. While they were in London they met Nassau Senior, Professor of Economics at Oxford, and John Revans, secretary of the commission that investigated the conditions of the poor in Ireland. The commission published its first response in 1835. These are the notes that de Tocqueville took during a conversation between **Senior** and **Revans**.

Senior: To what do you principally attribute the poverty in Ireland?

Revans: To a landlord system that profits from the intense competition of laborers [for land] to exact from farmers an excessive rent. From the moment a farmer begins to make a profit, the landlord raises the price of the lease. The result is that the farmer is afraid to make improvements, for fear of being taxed by his master for a much higher sum than his improvements would be worth to him, and he confines himself strictly to subsisting.

Senior: Do you think that a good poor law would by its nature diminish this evil?

Revans: Yes, by diminishing the competition of laborers and by putting the common man in a position to lay down, up to a certain point, the law to the proprietor of the soil.

Senior: Is the poverty as great as they say?

Revans: The poverty is horrible. The people live only on potatoes, and often lack them.

Senior: The number of children is very great?

Revans: Yes. It has been observed that the poorer they were the more children they had. They believe they have nothing more to fear. They marry in despair and try to forget the future.

Senior: What is the state of morality in Ireland?

Revans: This requires a great deal of explanation...There is not a people more gentle than the Irish when the moment of anger has passed. They forget offenses easily. They are very hospitable. There is not an Irishman so poor that he does not share his last potato with someone who is in need. Crimes are very rare among them except theft, which occurs only in order to subsist. They steal things that can be immediately eaten. There is the good side. Here is the bad: there is not a country where it is more difficult to obtain the truth from a man. [de Tocqueville, "This has been at all times the vice of the wretched and slaves."]

Senior: The spirit of party is very strong in Ireland?

Revans: To a point that it would be almost impossible for you to conceive. It would take a foreigner ten years to understand the parties. Party spirit pervades everything, but particularly in the administration of justice. To tell the truth, there is no justice in Ireland. Nearly all the local magistrates are at open war with the population. Moreover, the population has no idea of public justice. In Ireland nearly all justice is extra-legal. Unless Englishmen are sent to serve as judges, it will remain the same there. The jury system is almost impractical in Ireland.

Senior: Why do the Irish have such a great hatred for us?

Revans: Above all we have always sustained the Orangemen whom they consider as their oppressors.

Senior: Of what is the Catholic party composed?

Revans: Of nearly all the people. But very few wealthy and educated men are met with in this party, which has always been oppressed. That is a great misfortune.

Senior: Could an agriculturalist who imported a large amount of capital into Ireland be sure of reaping the fruits of his industry?

Revans: No, the people are faced with evils too great, and kept because of this in too great and continual a state of agitation for property to be secure there: the lack of security for property is the greatest evil in Ireland.

Senior: Do you not believe that this inferiority of the Irish to the English derives from a racial inferiority?

Revans: I do not know. But I am not disposed to believe it. In districts where property is secure and where poverty reigns less, the peasant shows himself to be steady and progressive.

Source: from Alexis de Tocqueville. *Alexis de Tocqueville's Journey in Ireland July-August 1835*. trans/ed: Emmet Larkin. Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1990. pp. 19-22.
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Conversation between Mr. Senior and Mr. Revans

When de Tocqueville visited London before going to Ireland, he met **Mr. Nassau Senior** and **Mr. John Revans**. **Mr. Senior** taught economics at Oxford University. **Mr. Revans** was secretary to a government committee that reported on the Irish poor.

Senior: Why are the Irish so poor?

Revans: The Irish are poor because of the land system. Everyone wants land, so landlords are always raising the rent. If a farmer begins to improve his land or home, the landlord raises the rent.

Senior: Would a good poor law be a good idea?

Revans: Yes. If there were a good poor law there would be less competition between laborers.

Senior: Is the poverty as great as they say?

Revans: The poverty is horrible. The people live only on potatoes and often lack them.

Senior: Is there a great number of children?

Revans: Yes. The poor have the most children. They believe they have nothing more to fear, so they don't think of the future.

Senior: What about morals in Ireland? Are people good?

Revans: That is not an easy question. They are a very gentle people. If they get angry, they get over it quickly and forget it. They are welcoming. Even the poorest person would share a last potato with someone in need. The only crime is the theft of food by people who are hungry. The only bad thing about them is that it is very hard to get the truth from them.

Senior: Are political parties very strong in Ireland?

Revans: Yes. It is very hard to explain how strong political parties are in Ireland. Politics even influence the justice system. Most of the poor are in the Catholic party and the local judges are not and that causes bad feelings. A lot of justice is settled outside of the law because the poor don't trust it to be fair. The only way the justice system will change is if English judges are sent to Ireland.

Senior: Why do the Irish hate us?

Revans: Because we favor the Orangemen, the Protestant party, over the Catholic party. The Catholics look at the Orangemen as their oppressors.

Senior: Who are in the Catholic party?

Revans: Most of the Irish people but very few of them have wealth or education. These people have always been oppressed. It is really too bad.

Senior: Would it help if people put big sums of money into the country?

Revans: No. The people first must have some security about land. Their fear of losing their little plots of land is the greatest evil in Ireland.

Senior: Do you think the Irish inferiority to the English is because they are racially inferior?

Revans: I don't know, but I am not inclined to think so. In places where the Irish are not afraid of losing their land and where people are less poor, the Irish farmer does very well.

Source: from Alexis de Tocqueville. *Alexis de Tocqueville's Journey in Ireland July-August 1835*. trans/ed: Emmet Larkin. Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1990. pp. 19-22.
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Alexis de Tocqueville's Observations

de Tocqueville (1835) traveling between Kilkenny and Cork:

> The habitations scattered along the road are the same kind of houses, perhaps more wretched still, than those in Co. Kilkenny. The mud houses have no windows. Their thatched roofs are often falling down. There is a little dung hill near the door and a pig in the house. Some farmers are dressed in rags. Some children working in relays pursue the passers-by traveling the roads. I believe that these wretched dwellings contain beggars, but my traveling companions assured me that they are the dwellings of small farmers who have twenty or thirty acres to cultivate.

While traveling in Co. Mayo:

> Further on I saw five or six men full of health and strength nonchalantly lying on the banks of the brook. If I had known less about Ireland, this idleness in the midst of so great poverty would have excited my indignation, but I knew already enough of this unhappy country to know that unemployment is the norm. One cannot earn his living by the sweat of his brow as God commanded.

Source: From Alexis de Tocqueville. *Alexis de Tocqueville's Journey in Ireland July-August 1835*. trans/ed: Emmet Larkin. Washington: The Catholic University of America, 1990. pp. 87, 112-113.
Used with permission of Catholic University Press.

A German Visitor to Ireland in 1842

The German travel writer Johann Georg Kohl visited Ireland in the fall of 1842. Kohl was struck by the poverty of Ireland and was not surprised to find that there was tension between tenants and those from whom they rented their land.

Of enclosures, walls, hedges or of regular divisions of the fields, I could discover nothing worthy of the name, and of pretty gardens and fruit trees or even flower beds for the girls, I found none. It was at first even difficult to distinguish the uncultivated from the cultivated grounds. Instead of cheerful farm-houses, I saw fallen huts and ruined cottages between the fields. As often as possible, whenever we stopped, I surveyed the interior of the houses which excited my astonishment. I was now in the most highly praised provinces of Ireland, and on a well-frequented road; yet, I found everywhere dwellings which bore traces of the most shocking ruin and neglect. How must have it appeared in more remote districts, and still farther from the road! Sometimes I had no occasion to get off the coach, for from my elevated seat I could perceive, through a hole in the roof, the interior of the dwellings we passed. The broken plates in the kitchen, the potato pot on the hearth, the damp straw bed in one corner, the pigsty in another—all this I could distinguish through the open roof.

"The landlords in Ireland," says Spenser, who wrote a book on Ireland 300 years ago, "take good care to make their poor tenants pay their rents; but they give them no help in building their houses, in tilling their fields, in improving their roads. Did they do this, they would themselves derive as much advantage from it as their tenants. But they leave everything in the state in which chance has placed it, and let their tenants help themselves and bear their miseries, as best they may."

Spenser then draws a picture of the farmhouses of the Irish, which in his day bore a close resemblance to the huts of our times. In like manner, the landlords of the present day take almost all from the tenant, but will give him nothing in return. The Irish landlords are in this respect, it would seem. Still worse than the great Polish and Russian proprietors; for they so far take an interest in the affairs of their dependents, as to assist the peasant in the repair of his cabin; and are compelled to furnish him with sustenance in the time of famine. But this is not done by the Irish landlord. Yet his tenant is a free man; he can go away whenever he chooses. He has almost all the conveniences of slavery (he is entirely dependent on his master; the lash is only wanting—a fact which must be thankfully acknowledged) without enjoying the advantages resulting from the sympathy and kind foresight of his master. So, also, he has all the inconveniences of freedom (want, care, hunger) without being able to enjoy one of its advantages.

Source: J. G. Kohl. *Travels in Ireland*. trans. from German. London: Bruce and Wyld, 1844. pp. 20-21.

A German Visitor to Ireland in 1842

I could see no walls or hedges dividing the fields. There were no pretty gardens, fruit trees or even flower beds. It was hard to know the fields from from the open lands. Instead of cheerful farm-houses, there were huts and ruined cottages between the fields. As often as we stopped, I went inside the houses.

Here we were in the parts of Ireland said to be the best and I was traveling on a busy road; yet, the houses were falling down. It must have been much worse in places that were far away from the main road. Sometimes I did not even have to get off my seat on the top of the stage coach to see into a cottage. Through a hole in the roof I could see broken plates, the potato pot on the hearth, a damp straw bed in one corner and the pigsty in the other.

Spencer wrote 300 years ago that landlords made their poor tenants pay rent, but that they did not help them build their houses, grow their crops or make their roads better. If landlords helped their tenants, they would help themselves, but they just leave everything to their tenants.

Spencer drew pictures of the farmhouses of his time and they look just like the huts I have seen. The landlords take everything they can get from their tenants and they give nothing in return.

I think the Irish landlords are worse than the Polish and Russian landlords. At least *they* take an interest in their tenants. They help them fix their cabins and if there is a famine, they must feed them. Irish landlords do not do this.

Unlike Polish and Russian tenants, Irish tenants are free. They can leave whenever they want. If they stay, they are almost like slaves. They don't get whipped, but they are controlled by their landlords who are not as kind as some slaveholders.

Source: from J. G. Kohl. *Travels in Ireland*. London: Bruce and Wyld, 1844. pp. 20-21.

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Irish Reports about the Condition of the Poor

The hovels which the poor people were building as I passed, solely by their own efforts, were of the most abject description; their walls were formed, in several instances, by the backs of fences: the floors sunk in the ditches; the height scarcely enough for a man to stand upright; poles not thicker than a broomstick for support; a few pieces of grass sods the only covering; and these extending only partially over the thing called a roof; the elderly people miserably clothed; the children all but naked.

Source: Issac Weld *Statistical Survey of Roscommon*, 1832, in Stephen Campbell, *The Great Irish Famine: Words and Images from the Famine Museum, Strokestown, Co. Roscommon*. Strokestown: Famine Museum, 1994.

Cabins of single rooms are there frequently occupied by a large family, with sometimes a widow or an old man lodging with them, or occupied altogether by several widows, or by one or more, and one or two old men, and all (pigs included) sleeping in different corners of the room. The families of those laborers, who generally get but very little employment; and the old men and widows subsist chiefly by begging...A number of these cabins are situated in little courts at the back of the main row of cabins which form the front street or road. These courts are seldom more than six or seven feet wide, and that space, which forms the only passage or entrance to the cabins, is usually blocked with manure made by pigs, and with rubbish and filth thrown out of the houses at the very doors.

Source: "First Report of Inquiry into the Conditions of the Poorer Classes in Ireland,1836." R.Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams, eds. *The Great Famine.* Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1956.

When earning nothing, persons who are in the habit of employing me have lent me money to be repaid in work when they would have employment for me. At such times, we have lived on one meal of dry potatoes in the day. I and my four children have often lived on eight stone of potatoes for the whole week; about sixteen stone would be sufficient for us...I am not able to clothe my children; the wages I can earn are too little even to buy potatoes for them; but the people that employ me...are kind enough to help me now and then with a little food or seeds beyond my wages.

Source: Testimony of Widow Kilboy to the Commissioners of the Poor Inquiry, 1836, in Stephen Campbell, *The Great Irish Famine: Words and Images from the Famine Museum, Strokestown Park, Co. Roscommon* Strokestown: Famine Museum, 1994.

Irish Reports about the Condition of the Poor

The huts that poor people were building as I passed by were in horrible conditions. The backs of fences formed the walls. The floors were sunk in ditches. The height was scarcely enough for a man to stand upright. Supports were made from poles no thicker than a broomstick. A few sods of grass were the only covering and they did not extend over the roof. Elderly people were miserably clothed and the children were almost naked.

Source: Issac Weld *Statistical Survey of Roscommon*, 1832, in Stephen Campbell, *The Great Irish Famine: Words and Images from the Famine Museum, Strokestown, Co. Roscommon*. Strokestown: Famine Museum, 1994.

Large families frequently occupied single rooms. Sometimes a widow or an old man lived with them. Everyone slept in different corners of the room. The pigs slept with them. The families are laborers who get very little employment. The old men and women survive by begging...A number of cabins are situated in little courts at the back of the main row of cabins. These courts are seldom more than six or seven feet wide, and that space, which forms the only passage or entrance to the cabins, is usually blocked up with heaps of manure made by the pigs and with the rubbish and filth thrown out of the houses at the very doors.

Source: "First Report of Inquiry into the Conditions of the Poorer Classes in Ireland,1836." R.Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams, eds. *The Great Famine.* Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1956.

Persons who are in the habit of employing me had lent me money to be repaid in work when they have employment. We live on one meal of dry potatoes per day. I and my four children have often lived on eight stone of potatoes for the whole week. About sixteen stones would be sufficient for us...I am not able to clothe my children; the wages I can earn are too little even to buy potatoes for them; but the people that employ me...are kind enough to help me now and then with a little food or seeds beyond my wages.

Source: Testimony of Widow Kilboy to the Commissioners of the Poor Inquiry, 1836, in Stephen Campbell, *The Great Irish Famine: Words and Images from the Famine Museum, Strokestown Park, Co. Roscommon* Strokestown: Famine Museum, 1994.

Edited for purposes of *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum*.

Irish Reports about the Condition of the Poor

I walked by people who were building huts. They live in very poor conditions. Walls of houses were made from the back of fences. Floors were sunk in ditches. A man could scarcely stand upright in the houses. The beams were as thin as broomsticks. The roof was covered with sods of grass. Old people wore rags. Children were almost naked.

Source: Issac Weld *Statistical Survey of Roscommon*, 1832, in Stephen Campbell, *The Great Irish Famine: Words and Images from the Famine Museum, Strokestown, Co. Roscommon*. Strokestown: Famine Museum, 1994.

Large families live in one room. Sometimes a widow or an old man live with them too. Their pigs live in the houses as well. All sleep in different corners of the room. Most people can not find work. Old people survive by begging. They live in cabins behind the main row of cabins. The rows of cabins are very crowded. There is only about six feet between them. The space is usually blocked by piles of pig manure and by trash from the cabins.

Source: "First Report of Inquiry into the Conditions of the Poorer Classes in Ireland,1836." R.Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams, eds. *The Great Famine.* Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1956.

When I cannot find work I have to borrow so my family can live. We live on one meal of dry potatoes a day. My four children and I live on eight stone of potatoes a week. We really need sixteen stone. I am not able to clothe my children. My wages are too little even to buy enough food. The people I work for are kind enough to help me now and then with a little food or seed beyond my wages.

Source: Testimony of Widow Kilboy to the Commissioners of the Poor Inquiry, 1836, in Stephen Campbell, *The Great Irish Famine: Words and Images from the Famine Museum, Strokestown Park, Co. Roscommon* Strokestown: Famine Museum, 1994.

Edited for purposes of *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum*.

Views of Economists

BACKGROUND

During the nineteenth century, the new science of economics attempted to describe the economic world and to promote possible solutions to economic problems. The Rev. Thomas Robert Malthus, the son of an English gentleman, was an economist and an Anglican clergyman. In 1798, in his anonymously published *Essay on the Principle of Population*, Malthus predicted that human population would always exceed natural resources. He believed that overpopulation led to competition for survival and that periodic disaster was a law of nature.

Economists and political activists Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels are best known as the authors of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). They studied the development of capitalist industrial society, tried to understand how the system worked, wrote about their findings, and organized working-class and radical movements to challenge what they considered was an unjust system. Because England was the leading capitalist and industrial nation of the time, Marx and Engels wrote extensively about its economic system. Periodically, they also examined conditions in Ireland and the relationship between England and Ireland. In their published works, they appear to disagree. Engels believed that the primary problem facing Ireland was the sub-division of Irish land. Marx believed that problems were related to English policies and that independence was necessary for change to succeed in Ireland.

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *Irish Landowners Before the Great Irish Famine, The Employment Problem in Pre-Famine Ireland,* and *Why Was There a Famine in the 1840s?*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

What did Malthus Predict about the Impact of Population Growth?

Engels: The Problem is the Subdivision of Irish Land

Marx: Independence is Necessary for Change in Ireland

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Daly, Mary. E. *The Famine in Ireland.* Dundalk: Dublin Historical Association, 1986.

Heilbroner, Robert. *The Worldly Philosophers.* NY: Simon and Schuster, 1967.

Mokyr, Joel. *Why Ireland Starved: An Analytical and Quantitative History of the Irish 1800-1850.* 2nd. ed. London: Allen and Unwin,1985.

O'Gráda, Cormac. *The Great Irish Famine*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1989.

Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Explain the way that nineteenth century economists describe economic conditions in Ireland before the Great Irish Famine.

Describe the solutions economists offered to solve problems about the allocation of scarce resources.

Debate and determine various points of view about economic solutions to problems in the 19th century.

STANDARDS

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELA 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 4: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Define basic economic concepts such as scarcity, supply and demand, markets, opportunity costs, resources, productivity, economic growth, and systems.

Understand how scarcity requires people and nations to make choices which involve costs and future consideration.

Investigate how people in the United States and throughout the world answer the three fundamental economic questions and solve basic economic problems.

Identify, locate, and evaluate economic information from standard reference works, newspapers, periodicals, computer databases, monographs, textbooks, government publications, and other primary and secondary sources.

Use economic information by identifying similarities and differences in trends; inferring relationships between various elements of an economy, organizing and arranging information in charts, tables, and graphs; extrapolating and making conclusions about economic questions, issues, and problems.

Present economic information and conclusions in different formats, including graphic representations, computer models, research reports, and oral presentations graphic inquiry.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- evaluate and connect evidence
- inquire, question, probe
- draw conclusions
- take and defend positions
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- ask and answer logical questions
- present information
- reflect upon content/form opinions

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Economics has been called the *dismal science* because it explores some of the most serious problems facing human societies. What are the major economic problems facing the United States and the world at the start of the twenty-first century? Are the major problems facing the world today similar to or different from the problems at the start of the nineteenth century?

2. Ask students to read the handout of the Malthus passages and answer the questions after each section.
3. Divide the class into two groups. Ask students: What did Marx and Engels believe were the causes of the problems facing Ireland in 1848? One group should read Engels and discuss the subdivision of Irish land. The other should read Marx and discuss whether independence was necessary for change in Ireland. Both groups should conduct extensive research and provide supportive documentation when presenting results. Students should consider why Marx and Engel appear to disagree. Which argument is favored by the students? Why?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Do the 19th century economists agree or disagree about the causes of the problems facing Ireland in the 19th century? If they disagree, on what point do they disagree? Do they agree about solutions to Ireland's economic problems? If they disagree, how do they disagree? Find current newspaper articles about an economic problem addressed by Malthus (over population), Marx (national independence), or Engels (scarce resources that have been subdivided.)

TEACHER REFLECTION

Students studying the nineteenth century economists' views about pre-famine Ireland discover that there often is not consensus about the cause of a problem or its solution. They will notice that the lack of agreement among economists about solutions to contemporary economic problems continues today. What are the issues and positions today? Which positions do students favor? Why? Some teachers found this activity more successful if students discussed current economic theories before discussing 19th century economists.

The work of the American econometric historian Joel Mokyr (*Why Ireland Starved: An Analytical and Quantitative History of the Irish 1800-1850*, 1983) and the Irish economic historian Cormac O'Gráda (*The Great Irish Famine,* 1989, and *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory,* 1999) have addressed the Malthusian argument. Mokyr concluded that Ireland's pre-famine poverty was caused by more than the Malthusian theory of simple overpopulation. O'Gráda has pointed out that Malthus said little about Ireland and what he said was ambiguous. Scholars like Mokyr and O'Gráda and other contemporary historians have demonstrated in recent scholarship that issues surrounding the Great Irish Famine are far more complex and subject to regional differences than the simple explanations for the famine offered in some narratives and interpretations.

What did Malthus predict about the impact of population growth?

1. "Famine seems to be the last, the most dreadful resource of nature. The power of population is so superior to the power of the earth to produce subsistence for man, that premature death must in some shape or other visit the human race. The vices of mankind are active and able ministers of depopulation. They are the precursors in the great army of destruction; and often finish the dreadful work themselves. But should they fail in this war of extermination, sickly seasons, epidemics, pestilence, and plague advance in terrific array, and sweep off their thousands and tens of thousands. Should success be still incomplete, gigantic inevitable famine stalks in the rear, and with one mighty blow levels the population with the food of the world."

(a)- According to Malthus, what forces lead to "premature death" of the human race?

(b)- Do you think Malthus believes "the power of population" is a positive or a negative power? Explain.

(c)- What does Malthus mean by the statement: "Famine seems to be the last, the most dreadful resource of nature"

2. "[No poor person should expect to receive poor relief from the state] if he cannot get subsistence from his parents, on whom he has a just demand, and if society does not want labour, has no claim of right to the smallest portion of food, and in fact, has no business to be where he is."

(a)- According to Malthus, who is responsible to care for the poor?

(b)- In your opinion, why does Malthus take this stand?

3. In 1808, Malthus wrote an essay for the *Edinburgh Review* in which he specifically discussed economic conditions in Ireland. "Although it is quite certain that the population of Ireland cannot continue permanently to increase at its present rate, yet it is as certain that it will not suddenly come to a stop…. Both theory and experience uniformly instruct us that a less abundant supply of food operates with a gradually increasing pressure for a long time before its progress is stopped… (T)he gradual diminution of the real wages of the labouring classes of society, slowly, almost insensibly, generates the habits necessary for an order of things in which the funds for the maintenance of labor are stationary."

(a)- What does Malthus believe will happen to the population of Ireland?

(b)- According to Malthus, what force will create this change?

4. In a letter to economist David Ricardo, Malthus warned about the future. "(T)he land in Ireland is infinitely more peopled than in England; and to give full effect to the natural resources of the country, a great part of the population should be swept from the soil."

(a)- If you were a member of the British Parliament and agreed with these statements by Malthus, what policies would you recommend? Why?

(b)- What would you argue if you disagreed with Malthus? Why?

Source: Robert Heilbroner discusses Malthus in his book, *The Worldly Philosopher*s. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1967. Permission pending.

Engels: The Problem is the subdivision of Irish Land

In 1845, just before the Great Irish Famine, Frederick Engels published *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. In this book, Engels blamed pre-famine conditions facing agricultural workers and tenants in Ireland on the excessive subdivision of the land.

> *Ireland demonstrates the consequences of over dividing the soil….In consequence of the great competition which prevails among these small tenants, the rent has reached an unheard-of height, double, treble, and quadruple that paid in England…When the time comes in the spring at which this provision reaches its end, or can no longer be used because of its sprouting, wife and children go forth and beg and tramp the country with their kettle in their hands. Meanwhile, the husband after planting potatoes for the next year, goes in search of work either in Ireland or England, and returns at the potato harvest to his family. This is the condition in which nine-tenths of the Irish country folks live. They are poor as church mice, wear the most wretched rags, and stand upon the lowest plane of intelligence possible in a half-civilized country… The cause of this poverty lies in the existing social conditions, especially in the competition here found in the form of the subdivision of the soil.*

While Engels acknowledged religious and national conflicts between England and Ireland, he disputed claims that they were the cause of Ireland's economic problems.

> *From another side comes the assertion that the shameless oppression inflicted by the English is the cause of the trouble….Or the blame is laid on the Protestant Church forced upon a Catholic nation….(but) this poverty is the result of our social conditions; apart from these, causes may be found for the manner in which it manifests itself, but not for the fact of its existence.*

Based on his economic analysis, Engels argued that repeal of the Act of Union of England and Ireland would not solve the economic problems facing the people of Ireland.

> *From all the foregoing, it is clear that the uneducated Irish must see in the English their worst enemies; and their first hope of improvement in the conquest of national independence. But quite as clear is it, too, that Irish distress cannot be removed by an Act of Repeal. Such an act would, however, at once lay bare the fact that the cause of Irish misery, which now seems to come from abroad, is really to be found at home.*

Source: Frederick Engels. *Condition of the Working Class in England*. London: Swansonnenschoen, 1882 [1844].

Marx: Independence is Necessary for Change in Ireland

1) Throughout the 1850s, Karl Marx wrote, comparing problems in India and Ireland. He argued that English policies made conditions in both of the countries worse. Marx believed that Irish independence from England was necessary before conditions on the island would improve.

> *On the one side you have there a small class of land monopolists, on the other, a very large class of tenants with very petty fortunes, which they have no chance to invest in different ways, no other field of production open to them, except the soil. They are, therefore, forced to become tenants-at-will….England has subverted the conditions of Irish society. At first, it confiscated the land; then it suppressed the industry by "Parliamentary enactments;" and lastly it broke the active energy by armed force. And thus England created those abominable "conditions of society" which enable a small caste of rapacious lordlings to dictate to the Irish people the terms on which they shall be allowed to hold the land to live upon it.*

2) In 1856, Engels wrote a letter to Marx in which he described Ireland "as England's first colony."

> *Ireland may be regarded as England's first colony and as one which, because of its proximity, is still governed exactly in the old way, and one can already notice here that proximity, is still governed exactly in the old way, and one can already notice here that the so-called liberty of English citizens is based on the oppression of the colonies… Land became the great object of pursuit. The people now had before them the choice between the occupation of land, at any rent, or starvation.*

3) In 1867, Marx wrote to Engels that political radicals in England should support independence for Ireland.

> *The question now is, what shall we advise the English workers? In my opinion, they must make the Repeal of the Union an article of their pronunziamento. This is the only legal and therefore only possible way for Irish emancipation which can be admitted in the programme of an English party…. What the Irish need is:*
>
> **1.** *Self government and independence from England*
>
> **2.** *An agrarian revolution. With the best intentions in the world, the English cannot accomplish this for them, but they can give them the legal means of accomplishing it for themselves.*
>
> **3.** *Protective tariffs against England. Between 1733 and 1801, every branch of Irish industry flourished.*
>
> *The Union, which overthrew the protective tariffs established by the Irish Parliament, destroyed all industrial life in Ireland…. Once the Irish are independent, necessity will turn them into protectionists.*

Source: Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. *Ireland and the Irish Question*. New York: International, 1972. Engels 39-43; Marx 61, 131-133; Marx to Engels 148.

Why Is It Important to Be Counted?

BACKGROUND

The 1841 Irish census has been a very important document for historians. When compared with the 1851 census, it is the baseline against which historians have measured Ireland's famine losses to death and emigration. It provides valuable information about family size, marriage patterns, occupations, land holdings and house types.

Valuable as it is, the 1841 official census numbers are only an estimate, flawed by undercounting certain parts of the population. Who were undercounted in the 1841 census? Historians have suggested the undercounted included the landless itinerant laborers, beggars, people living on land through informal arrangements made with tenants, squatters and possibly those who spoke only Irish. This activity will explore why an accurate census count is important.

(Note: This background passage will be read aloud to students. See Learning Experience #1 in this activity.)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Basic Facts About the Census

Five Big Reasons

50 Ways to Use Census 2000

Census 2000

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Lee, Joseph. "On the Accuracy of the Pre-Famine Censuses," in Goldstrom, J.M. and L.A. Clarkson, eds. *Irish Population: Economy and Society: Essays in Honour of the Late K.H. Connell.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Explain how the 1841 Irish census provides historical information.

Explain how gaps in the 1841 Irish census reflect historical events of the time.

Describe the United States Census 2000 purpose and process.

Create materials for students that promote the census.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 4: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms.

SS 5: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the necessity for establishing governments; the governmental system of the United States and other nations; the United States Constitution; the basic civic values of American constitutional democracy; and the roles, rights, and responsibilities of citizenship, including avenues of participation.

ELA 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

Arts 1: Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (Dance, Theatre, and Visual Arts)

Arts 2: Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation in the arts in various roles. (Dance and Visual Arts)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Analyze, interpret, and evaluate information, ideas, organization, and language from academic and nonacademic texts, such as textbooks, public documents, book and movie reviews, and editorials.

Evaluate their own and others' work based on a variety of criteria (e.g., logic, clarity, comprehensiveness, conciseness, originality, conventionality) and recognize the varying effectiveness of different approaches.

Interpret and analyze documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history.

Collect economic information from textbooks, standard references, newspapers, periodicals, and other primary and secondary sources.

Identify and collect economic information from standard reference works, newspapers, periodicals, computer databases, textbooks, and other primary and secondary sources.

Evaluate economic data by differentiating fact from opinion and identifying frames of reference.

Describe the basic purposes of government and the importance of civic life.

Understand how civic values reflected in United States and New York State Constitutions have been implemented through laws and practices.

Compose simple pieces that reflect a knowledge of melodic, rhythmic, harmonic, timbrel, and dynamic elements.

Use language, voice, gesture, movement and observation to create character and interact with others in improvisation, rehearsal, and performance.

Know and use a variety of sources for developing and conveying ideas, images, themes, symbols, and events in their creation of art.

Use current technology to create, produce and record/playback music.

Develop skills with a variety of art materials and competence in at least one medium.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- inquire, question, probe
- draw conclusions
- present information
- work with others to solve problems
- acquire and organize information
- find and solve problems
- make decisions about process
- utilize multiple resources in research

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Read the Background information to the students. Ask them: could people have avoided being questioned by the enumerators? Why? All of the 1841 census data is reported in English. What happened if someone did not speak English? (There were people in Ireland who only spoke the Irish language.)
2. United States census counters face a similar problem with undercounting. Uncounted Americans are most likely to be minorities: African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans and Native Americans because of language barriers, access, lack of understanding about the census, privacy concerns, and other reasons. It is estimated that as many as 5 million people will not be recorded on the 2000 census. They will be some of our neediest citizens; half will be poor children. Because federal and state allocations are based on census returns, programs for the poor, especially those in large cities, will be underfunded. Why might some people be missed by census-takers? Why might some people avoid participating in the census count?
3. Ask students to read materials put out by the United States Bureau of the Census. Are there other things students want to know about the census and how census information is used? Students may want to visit the census (www.census.gov) website. Do they think that the Census 2000 confidentiality notice is sufficiently clear? Ask students to write the five reasons the Census Bureau gives for completing the form. Using the list of census uses, ask students to make their own lists of five reasons to complete the census form. Even though the recent census-taking process has been completed, stress the value of the census.
4. The government has created census information for schools. Sometimes materials designed for millions of students lack something in their designs or messages for students in a particular locale. Students can plan a Complete the Census Campaign designed for their school. The project will be preceded by a confidential written survey of the students, asking what they know about the census, and what they are willing to reveal about their family data. For example, do they feel comfortable enumerating the number of people living in their house or apartment?

   Working in groups students can design pamphlets, posters, slogans, bumper stickers, buttons and 30-second radio and television public service ads for their Complete the Census Campaign. Students will notice that the Census Bureau materials are in English and in Spanish. What languages are spoken by the families of students and members of the local community? Students should be encouraged to make their materials available to speakers of those languages.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Write a paragraph explaining what you think about Census 2000. Keep in mind the positive impact of gathering information for the 1841 Irish Census as well as the weaknesses of conducting an incomplete census.

TEACHER REFLECTION

While this activity might seem to replicate the teaching materials prepared for the 2000 census, this activity is designed to provide a lesson in census participation as a civic duty even in a non-census year. The link between the Irish 1841 census and the 2000 census demonstrates the historical pattern of under-representing marginalized people—particularly the poor—in official census counts.

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

Students will be interested in the debate about whether to take the census using the head count method or to use a computer-assisted model that the National Science Foundation says can provide a more accurate count. What are the arguments for each side?

BASIC FACTS ABOUT THE CENSUS

WHAT IS THE CENSUS?

The census is a count that adds up everyone living in the United States, citizens and non-citizens alike.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE CENSUS INFORMATION?

The information from the census survey is strictly confidential. The law prohibits the disclosure and sharing of information with any other government agency, like the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) or Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Any Census employee disclosing confidential information is subject to severe penalties including up to $5,000 in fines and five years in prison.

WHO CONDUCTS THE CENSUS?

The Bureau of the Census is the government agency that is responsible for conducting the nationwide and local census in your community.

HOW OFTEN IS THE CENSUS TAKEN?

The census is taken every ten years. The next census will be taken on April 1st 2000.

WHY IS THE CENSUS IMPORTANT?

The information taken from the census determines the number of representatives from your community who will represent you in Congress. The census data helps to determine the distribution of federal dollars in your community for everything from planning schools and building roads to providing recreational opportunities and managing health care services.

GO AHEAD AND CONVINCE ME. WHY SHOULD I PARTICIPATE?

Every year, the Federal government distributes over 180 billion federal dollars to different communities based on census information. If you don't fill out a census questionnaire, you, your family and community may lose valuable public benefits and services.

This is your future. Don't leave it blank.

For information, contact the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Partnership Program at (212) 620-7702

Visit our website: www.census.gov

For job opportunities call our toll-free number: 1[redacted] 325-7733

888

5/7/99

United States
Census
2000

The questions asked represent the best balance between your community's needs and our commitment to reduce the time and effort it takes you to fill out the form.

Five BIG Reasons

Why You Should Fill Out Your Census Form.

1. Help Your Community Thrive. Does your neighborhood have a lot of traffic congestion, elderly people living alone or over crowded schools? Census numbers can help your community work out public improvement strategies.

Non-profit organizations use census numbers to estimate the number of potential volunteers in communities across the nation.

2. Get Help in Times of Need. Many 911 emergency systems are based on maps developed for the last census. Census information helps health providers predict the spread of disease through communities with children or elderly people. When floods, tornadoes or earthquakes hit, the census tells rescuers how many people will need their help.

When Hurricane Andrew hit South Florida in 1991, census information aided the rescue effort by providing estimates of the number of people in each block.

3. Make Government Work for You. It's a good way to tell our leaders who we are and what we need. The numbers are used to help determine the distribution of over $100 billion in federal funds and even more in state funds. We're talking hospitals, highways, stadiums and school lunch programs.

Using census numbers to support their request for a new community center, senior citizens in one New England community successfully argued their case before county commissioners.

4. Reduce Risk for American Business. Because census numbers help industry reduce financial risk and locate potential markets, businesses are able to produce the products you want.

"All the Basic Facts You Need to Know to Start a New Business," a publication of the Massachusetts Department of Commerce, shows small businesses how to use census numbers to determine the marketability of new products.

5. Help Yourself and Your Family. Individual records are held confidential for 72 years, but you can request a certificate from past censuses that can be used as proof to establish your age, residence or relationship, information that could help you qualify for a pension, establish citizenship or obtain an inheritance. In 2072, your great-grandchildren may want to use census information to research family history. Right now, your children may be using census information to do their homework.

Because we've had a census every 10 years since 1790, we know how far America has come.

D-3236 (6-98)

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

An Equal Opportunity Employer
U.S. Census Bureau, *the Official Statistics*™

United States Census 2000

The law protects your privacy. Individual answers are edited and summed before they are released to the public.

For additional information about Census 2000, visit the Census Bureau's Internet site at http://www.census.gov or call one of our Regional Census Centers across the country:

Atlanta 404-331-0573
Boston 617-424-4977
Charlotte 704-344-6621
Chicago 312-353-9697
Dallas 214-655-3060
Denver 303-231-5029
Detroit 248-967-9524
Kansas City 816-801-2020
Los Angeles 818-904-6522
New York City 212-620-7702/3
Philadelphia 215-597-8513
Seattle 206-553-5682

50 Ways to Use Census 2000

- Decision-making at all levels of government
- Reapportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives
- Drawing federal, state and local legislative districts
- Drawing school district boundaries
- Budget planning for government at all levels
- The distribution of over $100 billion in federal funds and even more in state funds
- Spotting trends in the economic well-being of nation
- Forecasting future transportation needs for all segments of the population
- Planning for public transportation services
- Planning for hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and the location of other health services
- Planning health and educational services for people with disabilities
- Forecasting future housing needs for all segments of the population
- Establishing fair market rents and enforcing fair lending practices
- Directing funds for services for people in poverty
- Directing services to children and adults with limited English language proficiency
- Designing public safety strategies
- Urban planning
- Rural development
- Land use planning
- Analyzing local trends
- Understanding labor supply
- Estimating the numbers of people displaced by natural disasters
- Assessing the potential for spread of communicable diseases
- Developing assistance programs for low-income families
- Analyzing military potential
- Creating maps to speed emergency services to households in need of assistance
- Making business decisions
- Delivering goods and services to local markets
- Understanding consumer needs
- Designing facilities for people with disabilities, the elderly or children
- Planning for congregations
- Product planning
- Locating factory sites and distribution centers
- Investment planning and evaluation of financial risk
- Setting community goals
- Publication of economic and statistical reports about the United States and its people
- Standard for creating both public- and private-sector surveys
- Scientific research
- Comparing progress between different geographic areas
- Developing "intelligent" maps for government and business
- Genealogical research (after 2072)
- Proof of age, relationship or residence (certificates provided by the Census Bureau)
- School projects
- Medical research
- Developing adult education programs
- Media planning and research, back up for news stories
- Historical research
- Evidence in litigation involving land use, voting rights and equal opportunity
- Determining areas eligible for housing assistance and rehabilitation loans
- Attracting new businesses to state and local areas

U.S. Census Bureau, *the Official Statistics™*

CENSUS 2000

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6/99

Belfast Becomes an Industrial City

BACKGROUND

While Ireland as a whole did not experience the industrial revolution, the city of Belfast was an industrial center by the middle of the nineteenth century. It was the principal producer of linen fabric and its Harland and Wolff shipyard built the fleet of steamers and liners for the White Star Line, including the ill-fated *Titanic*.

Many Irish who did not work in the Belfast linen industry worked in textile mills and factories when they emigrated to the United States. By 1860, 60 percent of workers in the mills in Lowell, Massachusetts, were immigrants, and three-quarters of those immigrants were Irish. While native and immigrant workers received equal pay for the same work, immigrants tended to get the lower-paying work of carding and spinning rather than weaving and dressing the looms (Dublin 148). Not only were immigrants assigned to the lower-paying jobs, they were also denied subsidized housing in the mill-run boarding houses (Dublin 155).

(Note: This activity can be used in conjunction with *Demographic Data and the Great Irish Famine*.)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

J.G. Kohl Visits Ulster Linen Mills (2 versions for differentiated instruction)

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Ballard, Robert. *The Discovery of the Titanic*. New York: Warner, 1987.

Bardon, Jonathan. *A History of Ulster.* Belfast: Blackstaff, 1992.

Craig, Patricia. *The Belfast Anthology*. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1999.

Daly, Mary E. *The Famine in Ireland.* Dundalk: Dublin Historical Association, 1986.

Dublin, Thomas. *Women at Work.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.

Kinealy, Christine and Gerard MacAtasney. The Hidden Famine: Hunger, Poverty, and Sectarianism in Belfast. London: Pluto Press, 2000.

Lord, Walter. *A Night to Remember.* New York: Bantam Books, 1955.

Wertheimer, Barbara Mayer. *We Were There. The Story of Working Women in America*. New York: Pantheon, 1977.

Titanic. A & E Home Video. AAE 95067. 90 minutes.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Books about the *Titanic*

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the development of textile manufacturing in their regions, in central New York State, and in the Merrimack Valley of New England.

Describe the influence of English textile industries on their American counterparts.

Describe the influence of the textile industry on regional development.

Describe the economic consequences of the demise of domestic textile production in rural Ireland.

STANDARDS

SS 1: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 3: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 4: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms.

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Ask specific questions to clarify and extend meaning.

Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information and between fact and opinion.

Make perceptive and well developed connections to prior knowledge.

Interpret and analyze information from textbooks and nonfiction books for young adults, as well as reference materials.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- analytical thinking
- evaluate and connect evidence
- consult and interpret databases
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- communicate results of research
- consult and interpret primary sources
- draw conclusions

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

Technology

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. The first cotton mill in New York State was built in Yorkville in 1809; the Oriskany Manufacturing Company followed in 1810, using spindles from England, for England had developed spinning machines at the end of the 18th century that changed the production of textiles from a domestic industry to a mill or factory-based enterprise. The American Samuel Slater smuggled the plan for a spinning frame out of England in 1789 (Wertheimer 78). Ask students to investigate how cotton is produced from the raw material to the finished cloth.

2. Ask students if they are familiar with any mills or factories in their region that manufactured textiles or finished clothing. Why did the textile industry come to the region? What resources did the region offer? (Raw materials? A power source? Capital? A work force?) What was its history? Are they still operating? Local histories, historical societies and newspapers will be a place to start. (Don't forget to look at advertisements.) Interview textile workers. If mills have gone from the area, there may be people who have memories or have heard stories of working in the mills and textile factories.

   Ask students to share their information with classmates, and the class can compile a book that they will publish for the school library, the local library and the county historical society about textile production in the area.

3. The shift from domestic to factory production of textiles had a significant impact on regional economies and on household economies. In Ireland, home-woven wool was generally used for the household, but hand-produced linen was produced for the market and became a thriving industry in the eighteenth century (Daly 12). For a while it appeared that flax could not be spun mechanically like cotton because the strands were too sticky, but in 1825 James Kay discovered that if flax were soaked first it could be spun mechanically. The Belfast linen industry was established with the steam-powered York Street linen mills, resulting in an industrial revolution in Belfast and eastern Ulster.

   While the linen industry brought wealth to Belfast and the linen-producing towns, the domestic industry that was so important to small farmers and especially to women and girls lost out to power spinning and to cheaper cotton production in English factories. The German traveler Johann Georg Kohl, who visited Ireland in the fall of 1842, discussed the linen factories he visited and their threat to the hand weavers. Ask students to read Kohl's account in the handout. How does Kohl feel about what he has seen in Belfast? Belfast businessmen were certainly proud of their mills but what does Kohl feel has been lost? What do students think?

4. Belfast developed a second industry in 1851 when an ironworks opened to build ships. The firm, which became Harland and Wolff in 1861, supplied steamers to the confederacy during the Civil War (Bardon 335). It built the fleet of liners for the White Star Line that carried Irish emigrants to North America, including the doomed *Titanic*. Ask students to research the design flaws that resulted in the *Titanic's* sinking after the iceberg struck the ship. Why was it that the ship carried only half the number of life boats it needed for its passengers and crew? What has Robert Ballard's work added to our knowledge of what happened to the *Titanic*?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, people believed technology would bring a better quality of life. The demise of local and regional industries as power replaced skilled crafts, the exploitation of workers, and the sobering spectacle of the *Titanic* suggest that industrialization was, at some level, a mixed blessing. Write an essay discussing the theme of "industrial development as a mixed blessing" in terms of contemporary issues (environmental concerns, child labor and other exploitive labor practices, monopolies, and the limitation of competition). What were some of the positive and negative results?

TEACHER REFLECTION

Students may want to put the information about their book on local factory or mill sites on a class website.

This activity led to discussions of contemporary examples of workers who lose out to automation. Ask students to check the news for factory closings or downsizing. Discuss the circumstances that lead to the closings. Some students have personal experiences with relatives who had jobs that have been lost or are in jeopardy because of automation, relocation, downsizing—even the internet.

There is material in the activity entitled *The Campbells Leave County Antrim* and *Lyddie: The Irish in New England Mill Towns* that teachers may want to consult. There also is useful information in the *Dear America* series: Barry Denenberg, *So Far from Home. The Diary of Mary Driscoll, an Irish Mill Girl. Lowell, Massachusetts 1847. New York: Scholastic, 1997.* The work is fiction but it is based on historical events. There are several pages of photographs of drawings and documents.

Teachers may want to use film clips from *Norma Rae* to show conditions in a contemporary textile mill.

J. G. Kohl Visits Ulster Linen Mills

Many of the Belfast flax-mills have a linen-weaving establishment connected with them, and the two together are called a linen-yarn factory. During the last forty years many cotton factories have also sprung up in different parts of Belfast, which now contain in all twenty-one great cotton and linen-yarn factories, some of which employ two thousand laborers, and are carried on in immense buildings eight stories high.

A great deal of Belfast linen is still woven at hand-looms in the cottages of the peasantry, but power-loom weaving, or that of machinery, is more and more trenching on their domains. The melancholy struggle between the hand-loom and the power-loom, which in England has already terminated in favor of the latter, is going on in Belfast.

The spinning of flax by machinery was long a difficult problem to the inventive hands of English mechanics. The process was much more difficult than that of wool or cotton spinning, because the flax consisted of a number of long single smooth fibers, which were not so easily spun into usable materials, as the shorter and more connected threads of cotton and wool. At length it was proposed to pass the flax through warm water previous to spinning it. The process splits, curls, and entangles the fibers which are then easily spun into a long connected thread. Thus, by warm water, the manufacturers are enabled to do without the busy and delicate hands of the spinning-girl, and one spinner can now, alas! superintend machines which do the work of fifty-four spinning wheels at once. Thus all the merry, whirring little spinning wheels, which once enlivened the cottage firesides of Ulster, are absorbed into a few gigantic, noisy, senseless machines, and the hundreds of snug cozy little spinning-rooms, enlivened by the cheerful voices of the singing spinners, are turned into vast factory halls, lighted up with low rows of gas, within which the watchful eye of the inspector maintains perpetual dreary silence and cheerless activity.

Source, J.G. Kohl. *Travels in Ireland*, in Patricia Craig, ed. *The Belfast Anthology*. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1999. pp. 173.
Used with permission of The Blackstaff Press.

J. G. Kohl Visits Ulster Linen Mills

Many Belfast flax mills also have mills to spin linen yarn. There are twenty-one linen mills and cotton mills. Some have 2,000 people working in mills eight stories high!

There is still a lot of linen woven by hand, but more and more it is made in mills. The sad struggle between hand weaving and power weaving is still going on in Belfast. Hand weaving has lost to power weaving in England.

At first it was hard to make linen thread by machine. Unlike cotton and wool, flax was hard to spin into thread. The strands stuck together. Then somebody thought of putting flax in warm water before spinning it, and it worked. The careful hands of the spinning girls were no longer needed. Now one spinner can watch fifty-four spinning wheels at once.

All the merry whirring sound of little spinning wheels by the firesides in little houses are gone. In their places are a few big, noisy, senseless machines. The hundreds of cozy little spinning rooms with the singing voices of the spinners are gone too. They have been turned into vast, gas-lit factory halls where quiet, cheerless workers are watched carefully by an inspector.

Source: From J.G. Kohl. *Travels in Ireland*. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1999. pp. 173.
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Edited for purposes of *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum*.

Characteristics of a Colony: Ireland and the Colonial Experience

BACKGROUND

The term *colony* has many meanings. The definition of the word *colony* means a company of people transplanted from their parent country to another land but remaining subject to the parent state. The Romans were the first to use the idea of colony. They settled Roman citizens in a hostile or newly conquered territory. When European explorers claimed new territories overseas, the question arose how best to settle the new lands. Planners adopted the Roman system of using colonists to settle those new lands. From the 17th century, colonies were settlements in new territories that maintained political and economic ties with a parent country. The thirteen British colonies in North America that rebelled and formed their own country clearly fits this definition.

Under Oliver Cromwell, in the 17th century, a new kind of colonialism was introduced in Ireland. Catholic landowners were replaced with resettled English Protestants of a mixed social and military background to whom Cromwell's military campaigns were indebted. In the years between 1641 and 1703, Irish Catholic land ownership fell from 59 percent to 14 percent. The British government maintained its control over the indigenous Irish Catholic population with an army of occupation.

In the second half of the 19th century, British imperialism developed a third type of colony which did not necessarily involve moving a population but which placed people in new territories like Africa, India, and Australia under Britain's direct control. The British created and perpetuated the relationship by military force. A third type of colony did not involve a new settlement, but it placed the control of the territory under British control.

British imperialism was part of a wider western European imperialism that included the French in Algeria, the Ethiopians in Eritrea and the Russians in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In these cases, lands and peoples who were considered part of the nation by the government rebelled and won their independence. (Additional information is provided in the Learning Experiences in this activity.)

(**Note:** This activity can be used in conjunction with *Was Ireland a British Colony in the 19th Century?*)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Land Use Capability

Letter to the Earl of Peterborough (2 versions for differentiated instruction)

Franklin, Paine, and Jefferson

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Elliott, Marianne. *Wolfe Tone: Prophet of Independence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

Tone, Theobald Wolfe. "An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland (1791)," in Seamus Deane, et. al. *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, Vol. 1 (Derry: Field Day, 1991), pp 926.

Swift, Jonathan. "Letter to the Earl of Peterborough 1726," in Seamus Deane, et. al. *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing,* Vol. 1 (Derry: Field Day, 1991), pp. 893- 895.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Analyze and explain passages from Irish and American political writers and evaluate their points of view about colonists and independence.

Describe the relationship between Ireland and Great Britain over time.

Describe different examples of colonialism over time and in different parts of the world, including America.

Use the *Land Use Capability* to explain the consequences of British colonialism in Ireland to native landowners.

STANDARDS

ELA 1: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for information and understanding.

ELA 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

SS 1: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York.

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 3: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of the geography of the interdependent world in which we live—local, national, and global—including the distribution of people, places, and environments over the Earth's surface.

SS 4: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Understand the basic ideals of American democracy as explained in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution and other important documents.

Explore narrative accounts of important events from world history to learn about different accounts of the past to begin to understand how interpretations and perspectives develop.

Understand the development and connectedness of Western civilization and other civilizations and cultures in many areas of the world over time.

Analyze historic events from around the world by examining accounts written from different perspectives.

Understand the broad patterns, relationships, and interactions of cultures and civilizations during particular eras and across eras.

Analyze changing and competing interpretations of issues, events, and developments throughout world history.

Study about major turning points in world history by investigating the causes and other factors that brought about change and the results of these changes.

Investigate how people depend on and modify the physical environment.

Understand the characteristics, functions, and applications of maps, globes, aerial and other photographs, satellite-produced images, and models.

Develop conclusions about economic issues and problems by creating broad statements which summarize findings and solutions.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

. analytical thinking
. evaluate and connect evidence
. inquire, question, probe
. draw conclusions
. ask and answer logical questions

- consult and interpret primary sources
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- take and defend positions

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to share their knowledge about the definition of colony and examples of colonies in past history and today. The word *colony* comes from the Latin *colonia* which means a farm, estate, dwelling. The word for land is *terra*; the word for tribe or race of people (especially those considered uncivilized) is *natio*; the word for those belonging to the same people or country is *popularis*; the word for citizen is *civis*, and the word for a union of citizens or a state is *civitas*. What about the Latin *colonia* suggests the nature of a colony? Do farms, estates and dwellings involve ownership? What is owned? How would students characterize the kind of land that makes up a farm or an estate? Who works the land? What role do such workers who reside on the farms and estates have in a colony? What is their relationship to the owner?
2. There was British interest in Ireland beginning in the late 12th century. However, it was not until the reign of Elizabeth I and the military conquest of Ireland that the land settled with colonists who were supported by the British military. These colonists were known as *planters* because they were *planted* in Ireland. (Later some of these colonists in Ireland went to Virginia.) When the British colonists settled in Ireland, the old Irish landowners became lease holders, tenants who rented land for periods of time and from the new colonists. Relationships between colonists (planters) and their native tenants were complicated by the difference in religion. The planters were Protestant and the native Irish were Catholic.

   The issue of land ownership and the difference in religion led to frequent unsuccessful rebellions that resulted in greater amounts of land given to new settlers, some of whom were members of the conquering military. Between 1641 and 1703 Irish land ownership fell from 59 percent to 14 percent. Even today in Ireland, the name of Oliver Cromwell is associated with large-scale transplantation (resettlement) of native Irish to the poorer lands of the west. He ordered the Irish "to hell or to Connacht." Students can examine the handout of the *Land Use Capability* and compare the kinds of land use in Connacht with other parts of Ireland. What kinds of land was given to the dispossessed Irish, those sent to Connacht?
3. During the eighteenth century, British economic policies were designed to favor Britain over Ireland. One Irishman who objected to the treatment of the Irish was Jonathan Swift (1667-1745). Swift was Irish-born but he regarded his time as Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin (1714-1745) as political exile. Still, he became a champion of rights for Ireland with his anonymously published pamphlets about Irish politics and economics, both of which suffered under the British, and he encouraged independence. In his *Letter to the Earl of Peterborough* (1726), Swift outlined the injustices to Ireland (see handouts). Students can read Swift's conclusion to his letter. What charges does Swift make about the way that the British treated their Irish colony?
4. Later in the eighteenth century, Britain's North American colonies objected to a political and economic policy that colonist called "taxation without representation." Such policies led to a call for independence. Students can read quotes from those in Britain's North American colonies who argued for independence. According to Franklin, what were American colonists entitled to expect from their government regarding taxation? What did Paine say about the attitude of the British toward their North American colonies? Did colonists find liberty in North America? Why did Thomas Jefferson argue that the North American colonists were justified in changing their colonial relationship with Britain?
5. The Battle of Lexington and Concord, an opening engagement of the American Revolution, is often called "the shot heard round the world." The French Revolution followed in 1789. In 1791, Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763-1798) published a pamphlet called *An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland* that called for Catholics and Protestants (Presbyterians) to unite in a common cause of political reform. Tone's words led to the founding of the United Irishmen later that year and to a period of exile for himself and his family in America and in France. In 1796, Tone wrote from Paris of his commitment to unite all Irishmen, despite religious difference, to break the Irish connection with Britain. Students can read Tone's 1796 words from Paris. To what goal did Tone commit his life? In order to achieve an independent

Ireland what did Tone have to do?

In 1798, the Irish rebelled in a series of local uprisings around the country. In August of 1798 there was even a small invasion of the French, who arrived to help the Irish cause. That too was unsuccessful. As a consequence of the 1798 rebellion, the British created a formal Act of Union of Great Britain and Ireland that became effective in 1801.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Compare Tone's words with the words of the writers of pre-Revolutionary America. How do Tone's ideas compare to the words of Franklin, Paine, and Jefferson? Write an evaluation of the effectiveness of the arguments for the equality or for the independence of colonists.

TEACHER REFLECTION

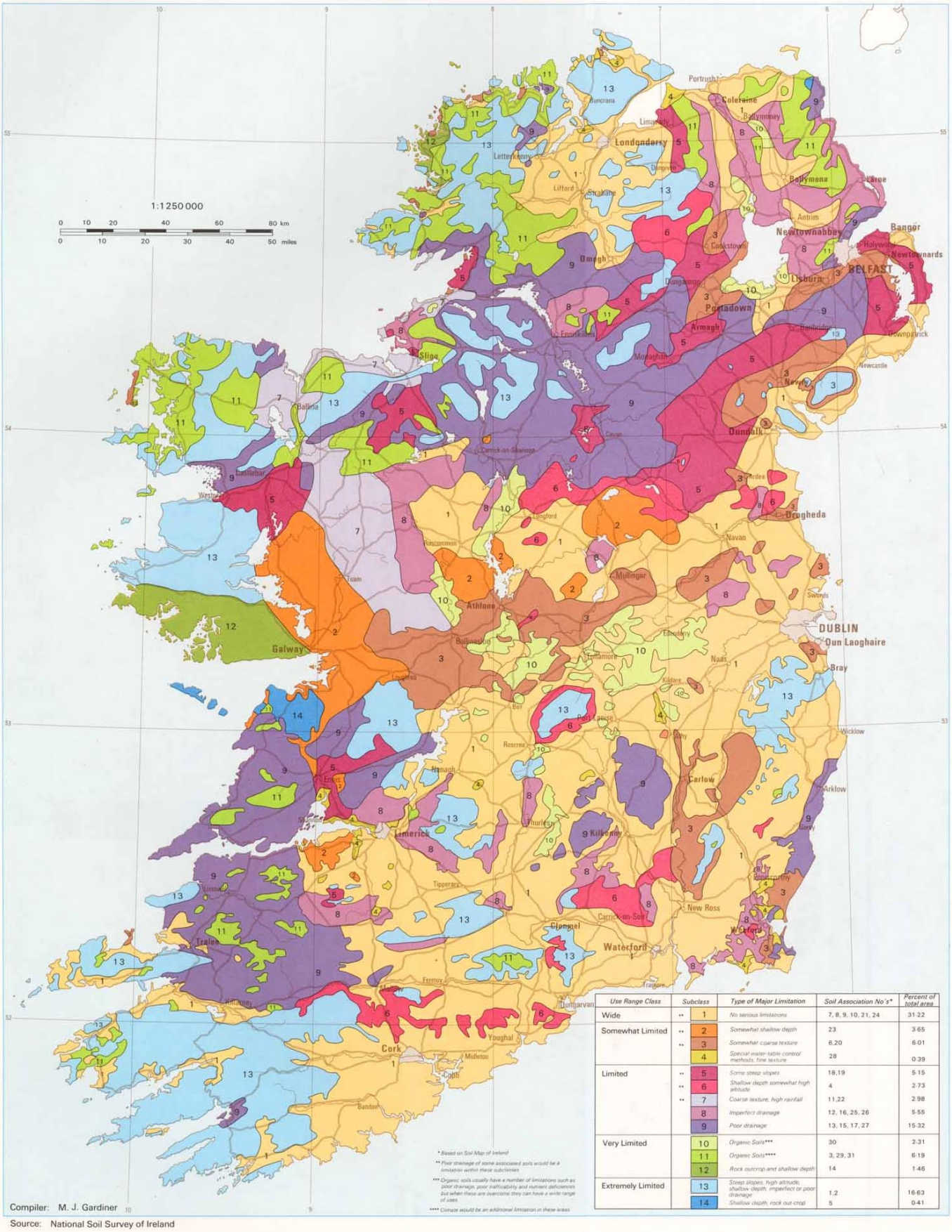
This activity provides the historical framework for the concept of colony, for its Roman origins and its adoption by Europeans as a way to settle new territories. The lesson focuses on Ireland's colonial status in the course of its political relationship with Great Britain. The activity is designed to prepare students for the concept that asks a question debated by historians: Was nineteenth century Ireland part of Great Britain or a British colony?

The late eighteenth century was an era of tumultuous argument over the natural rights of man and the rights of people to self-government. The activity examines Irish history within the context of other revolutions, particularly the revolution in British North America. The activity builds on the knowledge that students have of the American War for Independence.

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

Study Swift's other pamphlets that offer additional criticism of British economic policy limiting Irish trade or passing other laws that disadvantaged Ireland: "A Proposal for the Universal Use of Irish Manufacture" (1720), *The Drapier's Letters* (1724), and particularly Swift's savage satire "A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from being a Burden to their Parents or Country and for Making them Beneficial to the Publick" (1729). In "A Modest Proposal," Swift suggests that since England has restricted Ireland's economy in every way, that the only export left for the Irish is the children of the poor who could be sold as delicacies for the table. That Ireland had three years of famine in the mid-seventeen twenties made Swift's satire even more shocking and bitter.



Source: *Atlas of Ireland*. National Committee for Geography, Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1979, pp. 28.
Used with permission of the Royal Irish Academy.

Letter to the Earl of Peterborough from Jonathan Swift (1726)

It think it manifest, that whatever circumstances can possibly contribute to make a country poor and despicable, are all united with respect to *Ireland*. The nation is controlled by laws to which they do not consent, disowned by their brethren and countrymen, refused the liberty not only of trading with their own manufactures but even their native commodities, forced to seek for justice many hundred miles by sea and land, rendered in a manner incapable of serving their King and country in any employment of honor, trust or profit; and all this without the least demerit; while the governors sent over thither can possibly have no affection to the people, further than what is instilled into them by their own justice and love of mankind (which do not always operate); and whatever they please to represent hither is never called into question (893).

Source: Jonathan Swift. "Letter to the Earl of Peterborough (1726):" Séamus Deane *et al*. eds., *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*. I, Derry: Field Day, 1991. pp. 893-895.

Letter to the Earl of Peterborough from Jonathan Swift (1726)

Jonathan Swift believed that the Irish suffered under English rule. In a letter to the Earl of Peterborough (1726), he said:

I think it is clear that whatever can make a country poor and miserable is happening in Ireland. The Irish don't agree with the English laws that govern them. Their English fellow countrymen don't feel the Irish belong to them. The Irish can not sell what they make or even what they grow. They have to go overseas to get justice. They are not given government jobs in Ireland; jobs go to those born in England. Those English sent to govern do not always have any fellow feeling for the Irish or any concern for their welfare and their behavior is not questioned.

Source: Jonathan Swift. "Letter to the Earl of Peterborough (1726):" Séamus Deane *et al*. eds., *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*. I, Derry: Field Day, 1991. pp. 893-895.

Edited for purposes of *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum*.

Quotes

Benjamin Franklin (Testimony before the British House of Commons on the American Stamp Act. 1766):

(B)y the same charter, and otherwise, they (the American colonists) are entitled to all the privileges and liberties of Englishmen; they find in the Great Charters, and the Petition and Declaration of Rights, that one of the privileges of English subjects is, that they are not to be taxed but by their common consent; they have therefore relied upon it, from the first settlement of the province, that the Parliament never would, nor could, by color of that clause in the charter, assume a right of taxing them, till it had qualified itself to exercise such right, by admitting representatives from the people to be taxed….'The common rights of Englishmen,' as declared by Magna Charta, and the Petition of Rights, all justify it."

Thomas Paine (*Common Sense*, 1776):

"But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war on their families... This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe. Hither have fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their descendants still."

Thomas Jefferson et al (Declaration of Independence, 1776):

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States."

Quotes

Benjamin Franklin (Testimony before the British House of Commons on the American Stamp Act. 1766):

American colonists are entitled to all the privileges and liberties of Englishmen. One of the privileges of English subjects is that they are not to be taxed but by their common consent. They have relied upon it from the first settlement of the province that the Parliament never would assume a right of taxing them until it had admitted representatives from the people to be taxed. The rights of Englishmen, as declared by Magna Charta, and the Petition of Rights, all justify it.

Thomas Paine (*Common Sense*, 1776):

Some say that Britain is the parent country. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war on their families. This new world has been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe. Here they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster. It is so far a true of England, that the same tyranny, which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their descendants still.

Thomas Jefferson et al (Declaration of Independence, 1776):

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator, with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and ursurptions (seizing of power), all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States.

Edited for the purposes of *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum*.

Was Ireland a British Colony in the 19th Century?

BACKGROUND

The word *colony* comes from the Latin *colonia*, which means a farm, estate, or dwelling. As it has been used historically, the term *colony* means a group of people transplanted from their home country to another land, but remaining subject to the home or parent country. The Romans introduced the idea of colony with their settlements of Roman citizens in newly-conquered territories. When European explorers claimed new territories overseas, their governments adopted the Roman model and used colonists to settle the new lands and maintain nation interests and control. The British used the system of colonization in Ireland and abroad. During the Reign of Elizabeth I, the large-scale military conquest of Ireland began and the country was settled with colonists loyal to British interests.

Those who argue that nineteenth century Ireland was a British colony make three claims: Ireland was politically dominated by the British government; British economic policy was, in part, to blame for Ireland's poverty; and Irish society was divided by the historic antagonisms between the Irish Catholics who worked the land and the Anglo-Protestant landlords who acquired their estates as a result of English military conquests. That Ireland was a British colony is supported by a history of armed rebellions, by the campaign for the Repeal of the Act of Union and by the creation of an independent Ireland in 1922.

In recent decades, others have questioned whether regarding Ireland as a colony has been unduly influenced by the Irish experience during the Great Irish Famine and promotion of national identity during the late nineteenth century. L.M. Cullen (see Additional Readings) has argued that rather than being systematically impoverished by England, Ireland sustained nearly 100 years of economic expansion from the 1740s until 1815, the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

Some contemporary historians have argued that relationships between landlords and tenants were more complex and that Irish agrarian protests challenged the land policies (tithes, enclosures), not British rule. Relationships between Catholics and Protestants have also emerged as more complicated than some earlier historians have described. For example, nationalist movements like the United Irishmen (1791) sought to bridge the religious divide to achieve reform.

The success of the Catholic Emancipation movement under the leadership of Daniel O'Connell, his participation in the British Parliament, and Irish nationalist politicians' late nineteenth century advocacy of home rule but not complete independence also raise questions about whether Ireland was a colony or part of the United Kingdom. Writing in *The Making of Modern Irish History* (1996), S.J. Connolly suggested that the main feature of the relationship between Ireland and Great Britain was Ireland's ambiguous status: "...too physically close and too similar to Great Britain to be treated as a colony, but too separate and too different to be a region of the metropolitan centre; inheriting an undoubted division between settler and native, yet with racial distinctions that could make these absolute" (26).

Still others have argued it may be that twentieth century Irish nationalism and the demands for independence were less the result of British policy in Ireland than on the nationalism that spread across Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, especially following World War I. Eric Hobsbawn, a British social historian, has compared Irish nationalism with similar movements within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. According to Hobsbawn, British Prime Minister William Gladstone realized that nearly unanimous Irish Catholic electoral support for nationalist parties following the expansion of the right to vote in Great Britain in the 1880s doomed the Union and made Irish independence virtually inevitable (85).

(**Note:** This activity can be used in conjunction with *Characteristics of a Colony: Ireland and the Colonial Experience*.)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

What is a Colony?

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Cullen, L.M. *An Economic History of Ireland since 1660*. London: Batsford, 1972.

Connolly, S.J. "18th Century Colony of Ancien Regime," *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionists Controversy*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Hobsbawn, Eric. *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Kissane, Noel. *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History.* Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Debate the question of whether Ireland was a part of Great Britain or a British colony.

Create a speech as given by an Irish member of Parliament during the Great Irish Famine.

Explain the effect of colonialism on the economic development of the colonized.

STANDARDS

SS 2: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.

SS 4: Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of how the United States and other societies develop economic systems and associated institutions to allocate scarce resources, how major decision-making units function in the United States and other national economies, and how an economy solves the scarcity problem through market and nonmarket mechanisms.

ELA 3: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Analyze historic events from around the world by examining accounts written from different perspectives.

Analyze changing and competing interpretations of issues, events, and developments throughout world history.

Analyze evidence critically and demonstrate an understanding of how circumstances of time and place influence perspective.

Investigate important events and developments in world history by posing analytical questions, selecting relevant data, distinguishing fact from opinion, hypothesizing cause-and-effect relationships, testing these hypotheses, and forming conclusions.

Understand how societies organize their economies to answer three fundamental economic questions: What goods and services shall be produced and in what quantities? How shall goods and services be produced? For whom shall goods and services be produced?

Understand the nature of scarcity and how nations of the world make choices which involve economic and social costs and benefits.

Present in speeches clear analysis of issues, supporting their positions with well-developed arguments.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- analytical thinking
- inquire, question, probe
- ask and answer logical questions
- identify premises and rationale for points of view
- probe assumptions for accuracy and viewpoints
- present information

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to review their knowledge of what constitutes a colony and consider examples of colonies in the last three centuries by completing the handout *What is a Colony*? and sharing information with classmates.
2. In some cases, people and territories claimed as part of a nation are treated as colonies. Ireland is a good example of a country that was considered part of Great Britain by the Act of Union of Great Britain and Ireland (1801) but many argue that it continued to be treated by Britain as a colony. Historians continue to debate that Irish question.

   Working in two teams, ask students to describe what Ireland could expect as a colony and what Ireland could expect as a partner in the Union of Great Britain and Ireland. The colony team should consider the relationship between parent country and colony; the partner team should consider the relationship between two countries united by a politically created act of legislation. Who makes the rules for colonies? Who makes the rules for political partners? Who benefits in a colonial economic system? Who benefits in an economic system designed for partners in a political union? Students may want to consider the key issue during the eighteenth century of British North America: that colonists were equal to their fellow citizens in the parent country.

   Ask the student colony team to consider how the parent country responds when its colony experiences a period of economic crisis. Ask the student partner team to consider how political partners respond to partners in an economic crisis.
3. Historians who have argued that 19th century Ireland was a British colony have pointed to the British relief policy during the Great Irish Famine. British policy directed that relief efforts be funded by loans from the British treasury that would be repaid by local (Irish) rate payers (property tax payers). Charles Edward Trevelyan, the Englishman responsible for Irish relief, explained to an Irish landlord that the government policy had a larger purpose:

   > *Besides, the greatest improvement of all which could take place in Ireland would be to teach the people to depend upon themselves for developing resources of their country; instead of having recourse to the assistance of the government on every occasion.* (Kissane 50).

   How do the teams regard Trevelyan's words?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

As part of a team, take on the roles of Irish members of British parliament during the Great Irish Famine. Write speeches that define the government's relief policy toward their Irish colony or toward their Irish partner during the crisis. Deliver their speeches in a mock session of Parliament.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Experience in field trials showed that students found that the learning experience sharpened their ideas about the difference between the colonizer and colonist relationship and the political partners relationship. Students generally agreed that both colonizer and partner had an obligation to assist a suffering colony or partner. They agreed that either relationship required prompt intervention but differed on how colonizer and partner should respond.

What is a Colony?

18th Century:

A colony was a settlement in a new territory under the political and economic control of its parent country. Usually the settlers conquered and either dominated or replaced local peoples. Examples include British North America and Spanish and Portuguese America.

19th/20th Century:

A colony was a territory under the direct control of an outside power. Sometimes local people assisted the colonial power in ruling. Examples include British control over India, East Africa, Jamaica, and Nigeria; French control over Algeria and Vietnam; Dutch control over Indonesia; Japanese control over Korea; and United States control over the Philippines.

21st Century:

Are there colonies in the world today? Would you consider these colonial relationships? Explain.

Places	Yes	No	Explanation
United States/ Puerto Rico			
Canada/Quebec			
Russia/Chechnya			
China/Tibet			
Other			

Would you consider indirect control of another country using economic means and military threats a form of colonialism? Explain.

Source: Alan Singer. *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum* Committee.