School Show Study Guide:

MURPHY’S CELTIC LEGACY

“Irish Dance Reborn”

Wednesday, March 13, 2019 at 10:00am
Baker Hall at Zoellner Arts Center
Dear Educator,

On Wednesday, March 13, your class will attend a performance by Murphy’s Celtic Legacy, at Lehigh University’s Zoellner Arts Center in Baker Hall.

You can use this study guide to engage your students and enrich their Zoellner Arts Center field trip. Materials in this guide include information about the performance, what you need to know about coming to a show at Zoellner Arts Center and interesting and engaging activities to use in your classroom prior to and following the performance. These activities are designed to go beyond the performance and connect the arts to other disciplines and skills including:

- Dance
- Culture
- Expression
- Social Sciences
- Teamwork
- Choreography

Before attending the performance, we encourage you to:
- Review the Know before You Go items on page 3 and Terms to Know on pages 9.
- Learn About the Show on pages 4.
- Help your students understand Ireland on pages 11, the Irish dance on pages 17 and St. Patrick’s Day on pages 23.
- Engage your class the activity on pages 25.

At the performance, we encourage you to:
- Encourage your students to stay focused on the performance.
- Encourage your students to make connections with what they already know about rhythm, music, and Irish culture.
- Ask students to observe how various show components, like costumes, lights, and sound impact their experience at the theatre.

After the show, we encourage you to:
- Look through this study guide for activities, resources and integrated projects to use in your classroom.
- Have your students complete the Reflection Questions on page 29.

We look forward to seeing you!
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Whether this will be your students’ first visit to a theatre or one of many visits, it is always a good idea to speak with them about proper theatre etiquette. Please review the notes below to help make the experience enjoyable for all audience members, staff, and performers.

1. **Be prepared and arrive early.** Ideally, you should arrive at the Zoellner Arts Center 20-25 minutes before the show. Allow for travel time and bus unloading or parking and plan to be in your seats at least 15 minutes before the performance begins.

2. **Be aware and remain quiet.** The theater is a “live” space. You can hear the performers easily, but they can also hear you. Even the smallest sound, like rustling papers and whispering, can be heard throughout the theater. It is best to stay quiet so everyone can enjoy the performance without distractions. Please remember to silence your mobile devices too!

3. **Show appreciation by applauding.** Applause is the best way to show your enthusiasm and appreciation. Performers return their appreciation for your attention by bowing to the audience at the end of the show. It is always appropriate to applaud at the end of a performance, and it is customary to continue clapping until the curtain comes down or the “house lights” (the lights over the audience’s seats) are turned on again.

4. **Participate by responding to the action onstage.** Sometimes during a performance, you may respond by laughing, crying or sighing. By all means, feel free to do so! Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending on the art form. For instance, an audience attending a string quartet performance will sit very still, while the audience at a popular music concert may be inspired to participate by clapping and shouting.

   The artists may ask you questions or invite you to participate in the show by clapping or even joining them on stage. You should feel free to join or not, but if spoken to directly, please respond politely.

5. **Concentrate to help the performers.** These artists use concentration to focus their energy while on stage. If the audience is focused while watching the performance, the artists feel supported and are able to do their best work. They can feel that you are with them!

6. **Please note:** Backpacks and lunches are not permitted in the theater. There is absolutely no food or drink permitted in the seating areas. **Recording devices of any kind, including cameras, cannot be used during the performances. Please remember to silence your cell phone and all other mobile devices.** The artists are performing challenging and sometimes dangerous work which can become more dangerous by outside distractions.
About Murphy’s Celtic Legacy

Murphy’s Legacy began life in 2013 in the mind of show creator and choreographer Chris Hannon.

Having performed around the world with Michael Flatley’s Lord of the Dance and Feet of Flame for over 14 years, Chris left Michael and his productions for a ‘normal life’ in 2011. Teaching alongside his grandmother, Pat, who Chris named the show after, and mother, Kathleen, the vision of what would become Murphy’s Celtic Legacy (MCL) was burning in his mind. With a history of entertainment dating back to his great-grandmother, it wasn’t long before the burning desire to not only perform again on stage but also to produce and choreograph his own show took over.

With the help of his mother and grandmother, he produced a show with their dance students in four sell-out theatre shows across the North East of England. Despite the loss of his Grandmother Pat, Chris’ best friend during the early stages of the journey, Murphy’s Legacy was born, and ultimately honors Pat, who introduced Chris to her passion, Irish music and dance.

In may 2014, Chris began the task of producing a bigger live version of the production and the first task on his mind was an original music score. A chance meeting with John Elliott, renowned music composer, lead to the beginning of the epic Murphy’s soundtrack. With guidance from Irish musician, Gerry Conlon and Chris’ direction, the score came to life and did not disappoint in any way. The stage and date were set and Murphy’s would go live on January 31, 2015, which meant a race against time. With hours of upset and bumps as you would expect with such a task, MCL roared into life and the “legacy” continued.

Since that image and dream in Chris’s mind back in 2012, MCL has grown and grown every year, on every tour. The first international tour began in 2015 where Murphy’s Celtic Legacy was born. Touring the UEA, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain, Murphy’s then sailed the seven seas aboard MSC Splendida, Divina, Opera, Preziosa, Magnifica and Meraviglia from 2016 to date. This followed tours of UK, Cyprus and France, where we will return in 2019 as part of our World Tour.

In 2019, MCL will begin its first tour of North America, performing in 40 cities in the USA and Canada as well a premier in Ireland.
About the Show

Eire, a land that was once gloriously peaceful and harmonious, has descended into a greed-ridden territory where no one trusts their neighbors. Corrupt tyrants rely on fear and intimidation to beat others into submission. Disheartened and crushed, the Murphy’s flee in the hope of finding a better future that will nurture and cherish their descendants.

Their voyage across the Atlantic is violently cut short by fierce storm that washes them onto the calm, tranquil Island of Ishan, where they celebrate their seemingly safe deliverance. Unknown to them however, they are betrayed to the soulless King by the Dark Queen, Haidrass, who spies them from a distance. The Ishas, the indigenous community of the Murphy’s new home, live in fear of the cold and ghostly rulers. The hapless explorers have replaced one hell with another more terrifying and savage.

The Murphys and Ishas unite in their shared quest for peace and overcoming evil.

The Ishans’ King succumbed to temptation and visited the forbidden volcano which left his and his beloved Queen’s souls in tatters. Since this tragic day they roam Ishan in search of the Ishas’ to take their souls.

The two tribes have parallel memories of happier times destroyed by others and a shared optimism about how life could be.

Who will come out victorious?
Irish dancing is a very important part of the heritage and culture of Ireland; just like the Irish language, native sports like Gaelic football, hurling, and traditional Irish music. In the past few decades, Irish dancing has seen a huge revival, partly because of the worldwide success of Riverdance. However, it was around long before Michael Flatley and Riverdance. Learning Irish dancing is a regular extracurricular activity of many Irish children, and it always features prominently at Irish themed events like St. Patrick's Day. It's not exactly comparable to modern dancing, but that's what makes it so special. Here is a complete guide to everything you could ever want to know about this wonderful part of Irish life.

History
The roots of Irish dancing come from the Celts and the druids who roamed the island before the onset of Christianity and outside influences came along. Many of the druids’ religious rituals involved dancing, usually in a circular fashion around sacred trees. The Celts had their own folk dances with similar formations. This type of dancing was common around much of the European mainland at the time, and although it wasn’t really anything like what traditional Irish dancing became, remnants of the formations and patterns can be seen.

Naturally, the dancing was accompanied by music or singing and usually took place at religious celebrations or other special occasions. The ‘feis’ was a big local celebration held by Celtic communities. It was all about their art, culture and music as well as an opportunity for discussing politics, trading, playing sports and storytelling. Dancing was an integral part of the feis. At the Hill of Tara, then the seat of the High King of Ireland and the epicentre of Celtic life, a huge feis known as the ‘Aonach’ (great festival), was held once year, apparently beginning over a thousand years ago. Feiseanna are still held today in many communities, but these days they are usually just a showcase for Irish dancing and music, where dancers compete for medals and trophies.

When the Normans invaded Ireland in the twelfth century, they settled in the country and brought with them their native customs, dance being one of them. The ‘Carol’ was a popular Norman dance that was soon performed in conquered Irish towns and villages. The Carol dance involved one singer placed in the centre of a circle of dancers who then followed his singing and danced accordingly. It is the first historically recorded dance in Ireland. For the next few centuries dancing naturally evolved. Three types of dance emerged; the Irish Hey, the Rince Fada (long dance) and the Trenchmore. Instead of circular formations, line formations became common. These in turn became more complicated with female dancers weaving between males, or interchanging couples. Bagpipes and harps became the most common musical accompaniment. The tradition of dancing at religious ceremonies still continued however – it was not unusual to dance in a circle around a coffin at a wake!

It wasn’t until the 18th century when Irish dancing became more disciplined and evolved into the styles and formations we know today. This was credited to the emergence of the Dancing Master, a teacher who travelled between villages and towns holding lessons for peasants. This is how group dances came to the fore; it was a simple way to have all pupils in a class involved in one dance. The best dancers from each community where given the status of ‘solosists,’ i.e they were given special sections of the song to show off their talents and dance alone in the spotlight. When this happened, doors would be placed on the floor to give the dancer a makeshift. There was stiff rivalry between dancing masters from different territories, which is what gave rise to the modern dance competitions that take place today.
In 1893 the Gaelic League was founded as an organization to promote and encourage all aspects of Irish culture in Ireland. It organized formal competitions, lessons and rules for Irish dancing, and this further developed into the launch of the Irish Dancing Commission in 1930 to regulate the now immensely popular past-time. Irish dancing really took off once it had its own governing body, and over the following decades it spread to the vast Irish diaspora around the world.

Routines
There are three main types of Irish dancing routines; set dancing routines, social or céilí routines and sean nós or step routines. In all cases, the style is relatively formal and regimented, with little upper body movement, precise and quick foot movement and a strict number of steps to be completed. This was mostly because of the limited space performers would have had in the 18th and 19th centuries; small rural pubs or barn dances didn’t afford much room for arm movement or for dancing around the floor.

Céilí routines were the most popular form of Irish dancing, and a standard component of any social occasion. They’re performed with a minimum of two and a maximum of sixteen people (or sometimes an unlimited number of people!). Set dance routines are based on the French quadrille dances, i.e ‘quares’ of four couples who complete several different figures of the routine which are repeated throughout the song. Among other steps, dancers swap sides and swap partners – it can get extremely chaotic if you don’t know what you’re doing!

Step routines descend from the old-style sean nós dancing, and are what the Irish Dancing Commission has adopted as the flagship Irish dancing style. Each step is danced twice, once with each foot, with arms slightly less rigid than other styles. Percussive sounds are made with the feet to add to the rhythm of the music. In the 18th and 19th centuries these dances were often performed on top of barrels or tables.

Each type of dance falls into one of two categories; soft shoe or hard shoe. Soft shoe dances include reels, slips, light jigs and single jigs; these are all classified by the time signature of the music and the steps taken in each dance. Hard shoe dances include the hornpipe, treble jig, and treble reel. Some of the more popular sets have been given names, like the St. Patrick's Day set, the King of the Fairies Set, or the Tree Sea Captains set.

Music
Historically the traditional accompaniment for Irish dancing was a harp, bagpipe, or just singing. As the dances got more complex however, so did the music. Today, Irish dancing and traditional Irish music go hand in hand, and in the same way that there are a variety of different dances and routines, there is a variety of music and instruments to go with it. Some typical Irish instruments include the fiddle (pretty much a violin, just played differently), the bodhrán (a hand held drum made of goatskin and played with a special wooden beater called a tipper), the tin whistle, the concertina (similar to an accordion), and the uilleann pipes (Irish bagpipes). When solo dancers take to stage, a solo instrument will also generally play with them.
Clothes
Ornate and sometimes ostentatious costumes can be common in overseas Irish dancing competitions and showcases, but in both historic and modern Irish dancing, more modest and flexible costumes are used. Soft or hard shoes are used depending on the style of dance; hard shoes have tips and heels of fiberglass to add percussion noises and rhythm, while soft shoes are leather lace ups, also known as ghillies. Boys have their own version of the soft shoe, known as ‘reel shoes’, which still have a hard heel and produce noises, but not to the same extent as the hard shoes do.

Male dancers generally just wear a shirt, vest and tie with dark trousers, while female dancers wear specially made dresses. Each Irish dancing school has their own specific dress uniform. The dresses are just above the knee and pleated, with long sleeves and more often than not some sort of Celtic-inspired design or embellishment on the chest and back. In the past girls were required to curl their hair into ringlets or wear wigs, but this is slowly becoming less common. Dresses have become more and more flexible and breathable compared to decades past, when tough material and elaborate decoration was the name of the game. Outside of competitions you’re more likely to see dancers in simple, plain dresses with straight hair, so that the footwork and movement of the dance is given complete focus.

Competitions
Outside of performances, the best way to see some Irish dancing is by attending a competition or feis. In Ireland there are several levels of competition divided by age and location, ranging from county to regional and national competitions. The annual regional championship is known as the Oireachtas, which also happens to be the name given to the Irish government! Dancers are scored on technique, timing, and sounds made from their shoes. All contests have very rigid regulations and criteria for qualifications, and the whole process is very competitive between both dancers and teachers. The Irish Dancing Commission began holding an annual World Championship in 1970, and they still take place each year in a different corner of the globe. They feature over 6,000 dancers from 30 countries all over the world.

Riverdance
No article about Irish dancing would be complete without mentioning Riverdance, the theatrical show which brought the art to a worldwide audience and boosted its popularity around the world. Riverdance is just over twenty years old, having made its debut at the 1994 Eurovision Song Contest. It started out as just a seven-minute long interval act featuring Irish dancing champions Jean Butler and Michael Flately, who choreographed much of the show. The accompanying music was played by the RTE Concert Orchestra.

The interval act was so well received that the BBC commissioned a repeat performance at the Royal Variety Show that year and the audio recording stayed at number one on the Irish singles chart for 18 consecutive weeks. The next natural step was to create a full length stage show expanding on the original interval act. The production team did just that and debuted the show in Dublin in November 1994, just six months after the Eurovision performance. It sold over 120,000 tickets and immediately went further afield to the UK, Europe, and New York. The original show went on to play all over the world for fifteen years, before a final farewell tour in 2011. There are still several smaller productions touring all over the world and a number of spin off shows, ensuring that Irish dancing has a place on the world stage for years to come.

Source: https://www.claddaghdesign.com/history/everything-need-know-irish-dancing/
TERMS FREQUENTLY USED FOR IRISH DANCE SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES:

Cross – refers to a dancer’s legs being crossed in such a way that it looks like one knee is hiding behind the other (Note: the term “cross” is almost always used in conjunction with “turnout”).

Turnout – refers to a dancer’s legs being rotated in such a way that, when legs are crossed, heels are pushed out across the midline and toes face toward midline; IMPORTANT: proper turnout comes from the hips, not from the feet – a dancer’s toes and knees should be facing the same direction.

Point – a basic Irish dance movement of pointing the foot in front with proper technique (hop on back foot, legs crossed and feet turned out, pointed front foot gently brushes the floor in a staccato movement); “a point” refers to the shape the foot when it shows a proper arch, with heel clearly visible to the inside, top of the foot turned to the outside, toes long and tight.

Hop 1-2-3’s – a basic Irish dance movement whereby, with legs crossed and feet turned out, a dancer steps moving forward “right, left, right, hop (on right foot), left, right, left, hop (on left foot), right, left, right” etc.

7’s & 3’s – a series of basic Irish dance moves whereby, with legs crossed and feet turned out, a dancer steps laterally “right, left, right, left…” for seven counts, then “right back-2-3, left back-2-3” and repeats (to the rhythm of the music) through a right foot and left foot section.

Switch – a basic Irish dance movement whereby, with legs crossed and feet turned out, a dancer jumps straight up (in place, not traveling) and switches which foot is in front with which foot is in back.

Over – the basic Irish dance movement of leaping from one foot into the air with one leg extended, other leg tucked underneath, then landing on the opposite foot from that which took off; over-the-bridge refers to an over performed in reel tempo, also sometimes called “over-2-3.”

Batter – the basic Irish dance movement whereby, with legs crossed and feet turned out, a dancer brushes the floor using the tip of their hard shoe outward and then inward in such a way that it makes two distinct sounds; other Irish dance schools may use the terms “treble” or “rally” to refer to the same movement (note that each term is two syllables, representative of the two sounds).

Click – the basic Irish dance movement of one foot passing by the other foot in such a way that the heels of the hard shoes hit each other and make a clicking sound; clicks may also be done in soft shoe, but the heels don’t actually touch.

Reel – a type of folk dance and a type of accompanying dance tune. It is danced to in “reel” time ((4/4) meter). In Irish step dance, the reel is danced in soft shoes while the treble reel is danced in hard shoes.

Celts- a member of an Indo-European people now represented chiefly by the Irish, Gaels, Welsh, and Bretons.

Druids - a member of a pre-Christian religious order among the ancient Celts of Gaul, Britain, and Ireland.

Step routine - the generic term for a dance routine in which the footwork is the most important part of the dance. Limb movements and styling are either restricted or considered irrelevant.

Sean-nós - a highly ornamented style of unaccompanied traditional Irish singing

Bodhran - a handheld, shallow Irish drum with a single goatskin head, played with a stick.
**Concertina** - a musical instrument resembling an accordion but having button-like keys, hexagonal bellows and ends, and a more limited range.

**Uilleann pipes** - Irish bagpipes held on the knee or under the arms with bellows operated by the elbow.

**Ghillies** - a low-cut, tongueless shoe with loops instead of eyelets for the laces, which cross the instep and are sometimes tied around the ankle.
Ireland, Irish Éire, country of western Europe occupying five-sixths of the westernmost major island of the British Isles.

The magnificent scenery of Ireland’s Atlantic coastline faces a 2,000-mile (3,200-km) wide expanse of ocean, and its geographic isolation has helped it to develop a rich heritage of culture and tradition that was linked initially to the Gaelic language. Washed by abundant rain, the country’s pervasive grasslands create a green-hued landscape that is responsible for the popular sobriquet Emerald Isle. Ireland is also renowned for its wealth of folklore, from tales of tiny leprechauns with hidden pots of gold to that of the patron saint, Patrick, with his legendary ridding the island of snakes and his reputed use of the three-leaved shamrock as a symbol for the Christian Trinity. But while many may think of Ireland as an enchanted land, the republic has been beset with perennial concerns—emigration, cultural and political identity, and relations with Northern Ireland (comprising the 6 of Ireland’s 32 counties within the province of Ulster that remain part of the United Kingdom). At the beginning of the 21st century, Ireland’s long-standing economic problems were abating, owing to its diverse export-driven economy, but calamity struck again in 2008 when a new financial and economic crisis befell the country, culminating in a very costly bailout of the Irish economy by the European Union (EU) and the International Monetary Fund.

The emergence of Ireland as an independent country is a fairly recent phenomenon. Until the 17th century, political power was widely shared among a rather loosely constructed network of small earldoms in often-shifting alliances. Following the so-called “Flight of the Earls” after an unsuccessful uprising in the early 17th century, Ireland effectively became an English colony. The island was an integral part of the United Kingdom from 1800 to 1922, when, by virtue of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 6, 1921, the Irish Free State was established as a self-governing dominion of the British Empire. Independence came in 1937, but Ireland remained a member of the British Commonwealth until 1948.

Since then Ireland has become integrated with the rest of western Europe. It joined the European Economic Community (forerunner of the EU) in 1973. Though the country generally retained a neutral role in international affairs, in 2008 Ireland became an impediment to the enactment of the Lisbon Treaty—an agreement aimed at streamlining the EU’s processes and giving it a higher international profile—when the Irish voted against the passage of the treaty in a national referendum. The treaty, however, was approved by Irish voters in a second referendum, held the following year.

Dependent on agriculture, Ireland was long among Europe’s poorest regions, a principal cause of mass migration from Ireland, especially during the cycle of famine in the 19th century. Some 40 million Americans trace their ancestry to Ireland as a result of that traumatic exodus, as do millions of others throughout the world. Every year members of this diaspora visit their ancestral homeland and forge connections with long-lost family.
Ireland's capital is Dublin, a populous and affluent city whose metropolitan area is home to more than one-fourth of the country's total population. The city's old dockside neighbourhoods have given way to new residential and commercial development. Cork, Ireland's second-largest city, is a handsome cathedral city and port in the southwest. Other principal centres include Waterford, Wexford, and Drogheda on the east coast, Sligo in the northwest, and Limerick and Galway in the west.

Although Ireland is now both urbanized and Europeanized, its culture retains many unique characteristics, and its people prize folkloric and social traditions that largely derive from and celebrate the country's rural past. In “Meditations in Time of Civil War” William Butler Yeats, perhaps Ireland's best-known poet, evokes the idyllic and idealized countryside, a place central to the memories of the country's millions of expatriates and their descendants:

An acre of stony ground, where the symbolic rose can break in flower,
Old ragged elms, old thorns innumerable,
The sound of the rain or sound
Of every wind that blows;
The stilted water-hen
Crossing stream again
Scared by the splashing of a dozen cows.

Land
The republic of Ireland occupies the greater part of an island lying to the west of Great Britain, from which it is separated—at distances ranging from 11 to 120 miles (18 to 193 km)—by the North Channel, the Irish Sea, and St. George’s Channel. Located in the temperate zone between latitudes 51°30′ and 55°30′ N and longitudes 6°00′ and 10°30′ W—as far north as Labrador or British Columbia in Canada and as far west as the West African state of Liberia—it constitutes the westernmost outpost of the Atlantic fringe of the Eurasian landmass (the absolute extreme of which is Tearagh Island, the westernmost member of the Blasket Islands, which lie off the Dingle Peninsula and are part of County Kerry). Ireland, which, like Great Britain, once formed part of this landmass, lies on the European continental shelf, surrounded by seas that are generally less than 650 feet (200 metres) deep. The greatest distance from north to south in the island is 302 miles (486 km), and from east to west it is 171 miles (275 km).

Climate
Ireland’s climate is classified as western maritime. The predominant influence is the Atlantic Ocean, which is no more than 70 miles (113 km) from any inland location. The mild southwesterly winds and warm waters of the North Atlantic Current contribute to the moderate quality of the climate. Temperature is almost uniform over the entire island. Average air temperatures lie mainly between limits of 39 and 45 °F (4 and 7 °C) in January and February, the coldest months of the year. In July and August, the warmest months, temperatures usually range between 57 and 61 °F (14 and 16 °C), although occasionally considerably higher readings are recorded. The sunniest months are May and June, when there is sunshine for an average duration of 5.5 and 6.5 hours a day, respectively, over most of the country, and the ancient patchwork of fields and settlements making up the landscape glows under a clear, vital light. Average annual precipitation varies from about 30 inches (760 mm) in the east to more than 100 inches (2,533 mm) in the western areas exposed to the darkening clouds that often come sweeping in from the Atlantic. The precipitation, combined with the equable climate, is particularly beneficial to the grasslands, which are the mainstay of the country’s large livestock population. Snow is infrequent except in the mountains, and prolonged or severe snowstorms are rare.
Plant and animal life
Ireland was almost completely covered by glaciers during the Ice Age, and its plant and animal life are thus mainly—but not entirely—the result of the subsequent migration of species from other areas. As long as there was a land connection between Ireland and what was to become the rest of the British Isles, most species arrived overland from northern Europe. Irish plant and animal life nevertheless possess certain unique features owing partly to climatic conditions and partly to the fact that Ireland became separated from Britain by the Irish Sea sometime before Britain itself became separated from the European continent.

Apart from flora that came from northern Europe, several plants common in Ireland are believed to have reached the country from the Mediterranean, along a subsequently drowned coastal route, and others appear to have arrived from North America, probably by way of Greenland and Iceland. The western highlands are home to such hardy species as St. Dabeoc's heath, Irish spurge, Eriocaulon aquaticum (a pipewort with North American affinities), and the Irish orchid (a species of Mediterranean origin). Scattered over the island are sundew, foxglove, bell heather, sheep's bit, bog asphodel, and yellow fleabane, yet it is Ireland's extensive and verdant grasslands that leave the most lasting impression. Prior to the 17th century the Irish midlands had great forests of broad-leaved trees, but by the end of the 19th century the once large forests had been reduced to about 1 percent of the total land area. Now the island is mainly devoid of broad-leaved woodlands, and government-sponsored reforestation programs have chiefly favored fast-growing sitka spruce.

Common English animals such as the weasel and the mole do not exist in Ireland, which also has no snakes. Tradition ascribes the absence of snakes to banishment at the hands of St. Patrick; in fact, before their introduction as pets and in zoos in the 20th century, snakes had not lived on the island for the thousands of years since the Ice Age. In addition, there are only two kinds of mice—as opposed to four in Britain—and the only reptile found in Ireland is a species of lizard. Endemic mammals include the Irish stoat and the Irish hare. Deer have increased in number since the mid-19th century, but the giant Irish elk has long been extinct. Ireland abounds in birdlife, notably waterfowl. Numerous species that breed in Iceland and Greenland in the summer spend winter in Ireland, and many more migratory species stop there in the spring and the fall.

People
Although Ireland was invaded and colonized within historical times by Celts, Norsemen, Normans, English, and Scots, there are no corresponding ethnic distinctions. Ireland has always been known as a welcoming place, and diversity is not a phenomenon new to the country.

Housing
Compared with much of western Europe, Ireland has very high rates of home ownership. Whereas fewer than one-tenth of units were owned by their occupants when the country became independent in 1922, by the beginning of the 21st century, roughly four-fifths of units were owner-occupied. The housing stock in the country is relatively modern, with many units built since the 1970s. However, there have been housing shortages, and the waiting list for public housing units nearly doubled during the 1990s. Meanwhile, prices for homes rose dramatically as home ownership became a largely unfunded property bubble that played an important role in the Irish financial crisis of 2008. In the wake of that crisis, housing prices fell precipitously.
Ethnic groups, language, and religion
Ethnic and racial minorities make up about 12 percent of the population of Ireland—a proportion that doubled in the first decade of the 21st century. Immigration from the rest of Europe, Africa, and Asia has been significant since the last two decades of the 20th century. The key factors in increased immigration have been the more-open labour market provided by the European Union and the globalized nature of the contemporary Irish economy, both of which have attracted a wave of new residents. Today Poles constitute the largest minority population in Ireland. Although they are small in number, the nomadic Travellers ("Tinkers") are an indigenous ethnic minority group—defined by their shared customs, traditions, and language—who have lived in Ireland for centuries.

The constitution provides that Irish be the first official language and English the second. All official documents are published in both Irish and English. The modern Irish language, which is very similar to Scottish Gaelic, was widely spoken up to the time of the Irish Potato Famine of the 1840s and the subsequent emigrations. The use of Irish continued to decline even after 1922, when the language was introduced into schools; despite its decline, Irish never ceased to exert a strong influence on Irish consciousness. Although its use as a vernacular has decreased and is concentrated in several small Gaeltacht (i.e., Irish-speaking) areas, Irish is more widely read, spoken, and understood today than it had been during most of the 20th century. English is universally spoken. Compulsory Irish in schools has come under some criticism from the business sector, which would prefer to see students develop more-diverse language skills. While modern society might question the utility of the language, however, it remains an important element of the Irish identity.

The Celtic religion had a major influence on Ireland long before the adoption of Christianity in the 5th century. Its precise rituals and beliefs remain somewhat obscure, but the names of hundreds of Celtic gods have survived, and elements of the religion—particularly the cults of Mary (an echo of Danu, the Earth Mother goddess whom the Celts worshiped) and St. Brigit (one of Ireland’s patron saints) and several seasonal festivals—carried into the Christian period.

Since the conversion to Christianity, Roman Catholicism, with its ecclesiastical seat at Armagh in Northern Ireland, has been the island’s principal religion. After the Reformation, Catholicism became closely associated with Irish nationalism and resistance to British rule. However, church support for nationalism—both then and now—has been ambivalent. After the devastating Irish Potato Famine in the 1840s, there was a remarkable surge in devotional support of the Catholic church, and over the next century the number of Irish priests, nuns, and missionaries grew dramatically.

Today more than four-fifths of the republic’s population is Roman Catholic, with small numbers of other religious groups (including Church of Ireland Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Muslims, and Jews). There is no officially established church in Ireland, and the freedoms of conscience and religion are constitutionally guaranteed. Since the last decades of the 20th century, Ireland has seen a significant decline in the number of regular churchgoers. That decline corresponded with the heyday of the so-called Celtic Tiger economy—when, during the 1990s in particular, robust economic growth made the country significantly wealthier—and also with the revelations of child abuse by Catholic clergy that came to light in the first decade of the 21st century. The Roman Catholic Church nevertheless continues to play a prominent role in the country, including maintaining responsibility for most schools and many hospitals.

Resources and power
Ireland is not rich in mineral resources. Discoveries of silver, lead, zinc, and gypsum have been successfully developed, but the country’s dependence on imports for its energy requirements is high. In the early 1980s offshore natural gas wells began production in the Celtic Sea south of County Cork. The offshore reserves were limited, however, and a pipeline from Britain was built in the 1990s to provide replacement supplies.

For centuries hand-cut peat, or turf, was the rural population’s principal domestic fuel. Virtually all rural households are now connected to the national electricity network, which relies partly on hydroelectric plants and on small and medium-sized peat-burning thermal power stations. Although peat production was mechanized and industrialized in the 20th century, peat was largely supplanted by natural gas and by coal and oil imports.
There remains today some potential for natural gas exploration off the Irish territorial sea, but the major areas for innovation come from the potential for wind and wave energy development. In July 2009 the country set a national record for energy output from wind, generating 999 megawatts—enough to power over 650,000 houses, or about one-third of Ireland’s daily energy needs.

Services
Tourism plays a very important role in the Irish economy. Its value has increased considerably since the 1950s, when the Irish Tourist Board (Bord Fáilte Éireann) was established and began encouraging new hotel construction, the development of resort areas, the extension of sporting facilities, and an increase of tourist amenities. The organization's successor, Fáilte Ireland, also developed joint ventures with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. The vast majority of foreign tourists come from the United Kingdom, the United States, and elsewhere in Europe, but groups from the Middle East and China are increasingly seen at the major tourist attractions around the country.

Government and Society
The Irish republic is a parliamentary democracy. Its constitution was promulgated in 1937 and can be amended through a referendum. The country’s head of state, the president (achtařán), is elected directly by the public for a term of seven years and is eligible for reelection for a second term. The president normally acts on the advice of the government but also consults an advisory Council of State in the exercise of certain functions. The president signs and promulgates bills passed by the Oireachtas (Parliament) and, when so advised by the prime minister (taoiseach), summons and dissolves the Oireachtas. The president may, however, refuse to dissolve the Oireachtas on the advice of a prime minister who has ceased to command a majority in the Dáil Éireann (House of Representatives). The president is the guardian of the constitution and may, in certain circumstances, submit a bill passed by the Oireachtas to the people in a referendum or refer it to the Supreme Court to decide on its constitutionality.

There are two houses of the Oireachtas—the Dáil and the Seanad Éireann (Senate). Chief legislative power is centred in the 158-member Dáil. The Seanad may delay bills passed by the Dáil, or it may suggest changes in them, but it cannot indefinitely block their passage into law.

Executive power is vested in the prime minister, who heads the cabinet and presides over its meetings. The prime minister, the deputy prime minister (tánaiste), and the minister for finance must be members of the Dáil. The other government ministers must be members of either house, but no more than two may be senators.

Local government
The local government system comprises five county borough corporations, five borough corporations in the major cities, and 29 county councils, as well as numerous urban district councils and boards of town commissioners. Each of these is elected at regular intervals by universal adult suffrage. Of the 29 county councils, only 24 represent whole counties. For administrative purposes, the traditional County Tipperary is divided into a North Riding and a South Riding, each having a county council, and Dublin also is divided, among three county councils (Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown, Fingal, and South Dublin). County councils and county borough corporations are responsible for physical planning, roads, sewerage and water supplies, housing, public libraries, fire services, and courthouses. Local government authorities in the republic have no functions in relation to police or education.

Important policy decisions (e.g., on local taxes, borrowing, and the making of bylaws) are made by the elected councils. Administration, on the other hand, is the responsibility of the county (or city) manager, who usually consults with members of the council before discharging important executive functions. There is a city manager for each county borough council, and for each county council there is a county manager, who also acts as manager for the lesser local authorities within the county. Noncounty boroughs, urban districts, and towns have more limited duties, and, in regard to functions outside their scope, they form part of the administrative counties in which they are situated. The local government system is supervised by the national Department of the Environment.
**Cultural Life**

The cultural milieu of Ireland has been shaped by the dynamic interplay between the ancient Celtic traditions of the people and those imposed on them from outside, notably from Britain. This has produced a culture of rich, distinctive character in which the use of language—be it Irish or English—has always been the central element. Not surprisingly, Irish culture is best known through its literature, drama, and songs; above all, the Irish are renowned as masters of the art of conversation.

Use of the Irish language declined steadily during the 19th century and was nearly wiped out by the Great Famine of the 1840s and subsequent emigration, which particularly affected the Irish-speaking population in the western portion of the country—the area “beyond the pale” (i.e., beyond the English-speaking and English-controlled area around Dublin). From the mid-19th century, in the years following the famine, there was a resurgence in Irish language and traditional culture. This Gaelic revival led in turn to the Irish literary renaissance of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, in which native expression was explored and renewed by a generation of writers and academics. It also produced a resurgence in traditional musical and dance forms. The cultural revivalism became an inspiration to the Irish nationalist struggle of the early decades of the 20th century. Partly because of government subsidies and programs, traditional cultural activities, especially the use of the Irish language and the revival of arts and crafts, have increased.

**Daily life and social customs**

Ireland has several distinct regional cultures rather than a single national one; moreover, the daily lives of city dwellers are in some ways much different from those living in the countryside. For example, whereas Dublin is one of Europe’s most cosmopolitan cities, the Blasket Islands of Dingle Bay, off Ireland’s southwestern coast, seem almost a throwback to earlier centuries. Wherever they live, the Irish maintain a vibrant and lively folk culture. Thousands participate in the country’s numerous amateur musical, dance, and storytelling events. A great many also engage in a variety of craft-based industries, producing items such as glass, ceramics, ironwork, wood-turning, linens, embroidery, and knitwear, served by the Crafts Council of Ireland (based in Kilkenny) and an annual trade fair in Dublin. Irish fashion has advanced beyond the still-popular Aran sweater, with various designers establishing fashion trends that have broad appeal both nationally and internationally.

The Irish pub serves as a focal point for many small villages and urban neighbourhoods, a place where the great Irish passion for conversation, stories, and jokes can be indulged. Pub attendance declined somewhat in the early 21st century after the imposition of a smoking ban, the restriction of hours when families could take children to eat at pubs, and the enactment of more-stringent drunk-driving laws. Still, Ireland remains home to some of the world’s finest beers, whiskeys, and other spirits, which accompany the lively music and socializing that seem to come naturally to the Irish and those who visit. Traditional Irish music—using locally made instruments such as the fiddle, the tin whistle, and the uilleann pipes (Irish bagpipes)—is performed at many pubs, and traditional songs are often sung there in Irish, at times accompanied by the Celtic harp (an emblem of Ireland). The céilí, a traditional musical gathering, is an enduring expression of Irish social life that has counterparts in other Celtic cultures. Such gatherings, as well as hiring fairs, cattle shows, and other festivals, usually feature locally produced ales and whiskeys and traditional foods such as soda bread, corned beef, and colcannon (a stew of potatoes and cabbage).

The Wexford Opera Festival, held annually in the fall, draws a large international audience. Of particular importance is St. Patrick’s Day (March 17), honoring the country’s patron saint. Whereas overseas the holiday has become a boisterous, largely secular celebration of all things Irish, in Ireland it is a religious occasion often observed by saying prayers for peace, especially in neighboring Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, some of the practices celebrated abroad have been adopted locally in the interest of tourism.

**The arts**

**Literature: Prose and poetry**

The earliest known literature in the Old Irish language takes several forms. Many manuscripts, such as the Milan and Turin glosses on the Bible (so named for the libraries where they are housed), are religious in nature; others are secular and include lyric poems, fragments of epic verse, and riddles. Little of this literature is read today.
except by scholars of the Irish language and of comparative historical linguistics. Instead, the stream of Irish literature that has enriched world culture has been almost entirely written in English. The sheer volume of work attributed to Irish writers is remarkable, considering the country’s small size and, until relatively recently, its only partially literate populace.

A flowering of Irish literary works especially occurred with the standardization of Irish in the mid-20th century. After World War II a new wave of poets, novelists, and dramatists produced a significant literature in modern Irish, among them Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Máirtín Ó Direáin, and Máire Mhac an tSaoi. Beginning in the 1970s, another generation of writers made important contributions in Irish, notably Micheal O’Siadhail, Gabriel Rosenstock, Michael Hartnett, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Áine Ní Ghlinn, and Cathal Ó Searcaigh.

Many modes of thought and expression characteristic of Irish-language formulations were gradually absorbed into the English spoken in Ireland. The remarkable contribution that Anglo-Irish literature and drama have made to the Western world may in part be ascribed to this linguistic cross-fertilization. It is also noteworthy that so small a country should produce so much creative literary genius. The great Anglo-Irish satirist Jonathan Swift, dean of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Dublin, drew upon his experience of life in Ireland for his writing. The list of influential Irish prose writers and poets who both benefited from and contributed to the interplay between the different strands of the Anglo-Irish tradition is long. Among them are two of Ireland’s four winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature, poets William Butler Yeats (1923) and Seamus Heaney (1995). Others with an international reputation include prose writers George Moore, Elizabeth Bowen, Flann O’Brien, Edna O’Brien, William Trevor, John McGahern, Roddy Doyle, John Banville, Jennifer Johnston, and especially James Joyce; and poets John Montague (American-born), Eavan Boland, Brendan Kennelly, Paul Durcan, and Paula Meehan. The Irish Writers’ Centre and Poetry Ireland actively promote contemporary literature in prose and verse.

**Theatre**

Irish achievements in the theatre rival those in literature. Two Irish dramatists won Nobel Prizes for Literature, George Bernard Shaw (1925) and Samuel Beckett (1969), and several others, including Oliver Goldsmith, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Oscar Wilde, John Millington Synge, and Sean O’Casey, are also known throughout the English-speaking world.

Dublin is the centre of Ireland’s theatrical life. Its Abbey Theatre, founded in 1904 and rebuilt in the mid-1960s, stages classic Irish plays as well as new works in both Irish and English. The Gate Theatre produces Irish and international drama, while the Peacock Theatre, located under the foyer of the Abbey Theatre, concentrates on experimental plays and on works in Irish. Theatres and theatre companies such as Galway's Druid Theatre are found throughout the country, however, promoting a wide range of national and international drama. In addition, there is a vigorous amateur dramatic movement active throughout the country.

**Music and dance**

Irish traditional musical forms date from preliterate times. The Irish harp long had been the only instrument played, but many other instruments—such as the uilleann pipes, the fiddle, and the accordion—were added later. The Royal Irish Academy of Music is a major institution for music training, and folkloric and musical conservation groups such as Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (Fellowship of Irish Musicians) have established workshops and libraries throughout the country and around the world. The revival of traditional music in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was followed by an even more energetic resurgence beginning in the 1960s. Irish songs gained wide appeal in Europe in the 19th century, and the music taken to the United States by Irish immigrants became one of the principal sources of traditional American music. Irish traditional musicians such as the Clancy Brothers, Planxty, and the Boys of the Lough, Clannad, and the Chieftains have toured much of the world. More urban and working-class-based music and song have been represented by groups such as the Dubliners and the Wolfe Tones. Interest in Irish traditional music was greatly boosted by a vogue for Irish pubs that spread across the world. Elements of traditional Irish music also have been appropriated by rock musicians to create a distinctive Irish popular music form with great international appeal. For example, beginning in the 1980s, the postpunk group U2 received international acclaim, and its lead singer, Bono, gained fame for his outspokenness on domestic and global political issues. Other popular music groups and artists have included Thin Lizzy, Rory Gallagher, the Corrs, the
Cranberries, Bob Geldof, Sinéad O’Connor, My Bloody Valentine, Mary and Frances Black, Hothouse Flowers, and Damien Rice. Similarly influenced by traditional Irish music, the ethereal-voiced New Age singer Enya (Eithne Ní Bhraonáin) gained a huge international following beginning in the late 1980s. Opera is less popular in Ireland, although singers such as Bernadette Greevy and Suzanne Murphy have gained widespread recognition. Among the artists who came to the forefront in the 21st century were vocalist Sharon Shannon, the traditional group Danú, and the pop duo Jedward.

Ireland is famous for its tenor singers of Irish traditional tunes. The prototypical Irish tenor was John McCormack, noted for his brilliant tone and resonant timbre. Although the fashion faded from roughly the 1930s to the 1960s, it regained its vitality and popularity in the work of Frank Patterson and American-born Robert White.

Best known of the Irish classical composers are John Field, whose work influenced that of Frédéric Chopin, and Michael Balfe. Based in Dublin and maintained by Radio Telefís Éireann (RTÉ; the state-owned broadcasting company), the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra and the RTÉ Concert Orchestra are the country’s principal orchestral groups. Ireland’s leading contemporary music ensemble, Concorde, commissions and performs the work of contemporary composers. New music is supported by the Contemporary Music Centre in Dublin, a national archive and resource center. Many arts organizations and individual artists are supported in part by the Arts Council of Ireland, a developmental government agency.

Ireland has a long tradition of folk dancing. Solo dancing is characterized by its lightning footwork and high kicks, all executed while the upper body is kept rigidly straight; jigs and reels have always been popular. The interest in Irish dancing, which grew apace with the revival of traditional music, led in the 1990s to the creation of the performance work Riverdance, which achieved international acclaim and sparked the founding of dance companies around the world that explored this style.

Visual arts
At the turn of the 20th century, Irish art remained relatively isolated from the contemporary trends that spread throughout Europe. Painter John Butler Yeats (father of poet William Butler Yeats) received widespread praise for his portraiture, as did Sir William Orpen, who influenced a generation of Irish artists as a teacher. Paul Henry’s depictions of the Irish countryside were also popular. Jack Butler Yeats, the poet’s brother, using traditional Irish subjects and elements of Celtic mythology, became recognized as the major Irish artist of the mid-20th century.

It was only after World War II that avant-garde developments, popular in the rest of Europe for decades, fully touched Irish art. In this climate, Louis Le Brocquy gained fame for his abstract portraits. Perhaps the most prominent Irish-born artist of the postwar period was Francis Bacon, who became known for his brutal figurative paintings. Although he spent most of his life in Britain, his studio has been reconstructed in the Hugh Lane Gallery (formally Dublin City Gallery the Hugh Lane) in Dublin. Throughout the postwar period, alternative exhibiting spaces and organizations increasingly made it possible for more experimental styles and artists to be noticed in Ireland.

By the late 20th century, Irish art reflected a wide range of styles and media. As in literature, many contemporary visual artists (e.g., Brian Maguire, Dorothy Cross, Kathy Pendergast, and Brian Bourke) gained international reputations, with their work included in major international shows such as the Venice Biennale. Many late-century Irish artists settled in the thriving art scene in London, yet their work often remained infused with the social and political issues of their homeland.

Annual art exhibitions, the most important of which is the Royal Hibernian Academy, are a regular feature of modern Irish cultural life, and many corporate collections of contemporary Irish art are of the highest calibre. Printmaking has flourished since the establishment of the Graphic Studio and Graphic Studio Gallery by Mary Farl Powers, followed by the Black Church Print Studio (both now located in Dublin) and other studios in urban areas.

Film is also an important medium for Irish visual artists and writers. During the late 20th century, several Irish films received international acclaim, including The Crying Game (1992), which won an Academy Award for best

The endeavors of the Irish Georgian Society and of An Taisce (the National Trust) have helped to protect the architectural heritage of the country. Dublin's many 18th-century buildings are among the finest-preserved in all of Europe.

**Cultural institutions**

Most of the country's major museums, libraries, and learned societies are located in Dublin, including the National Museum of Ireland, the National Gallery of Ireland, the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA), and the National Library of Ireland. Under British rule a number of Anglo-Irish cultural institutions were established there and successfully adapted to accommodate stronger nationalist sentiment during the 20th century. These include the Royal Irish Academy (1785) and the Royal Dublin Society (1731). Also important are the Royal Hibernian Academy (1823) and the Royal Irish Academy of Music (1856). The quasi-governmental Arts Council (An Chomhairle Ealaion; 1951) distributes annual state grants to assist the arts and artists. Individual writers, artists, and composers also are aided by tax concessions and by additional financial support from the Aosdána organization. The establishment of a national lottery in 1986 substantially increased funding for the arts and for sports.

Many institutions are specifically concerned with the popularization and preservation of aspects of traditional national culture. Notably, the Gaelic League (Conradh na Gaeilge; 1893) promotes the use of the Irish language. Other bodies concentrate on the organization of folk music festivals (feiseanna), at which there are competitions in traditional storytelling and dancing as well as in instrumental music and singing.


**History**

**Early Irish History**

Historians estimate that Ireland was first settled by humans at a relatively late stage in European terms – about 10,000 years ago. Around 4000 BC it is estimated that the first farmers arrived in Ireland. Farming marked the arrival of the new Stone Age. Around 300BC, Iron Age warriors known as the Celts came to Ireland from mainland Europe. The Celts had a huge influence on Ireland. Many famous Irish myths stem from stories about Celtic warriors. The current first official language of the Republic of Ireland, Irish (or Gaeilge) stems from Celtic language.

**Early Christian Ireland**

Following the arrival of Saint Patrick and other Christian missionaries in the early to mid-5th century, Christianity took over the indigenous pagan religion by the year 600 AD. Irish Christian scholars excelled in the study of Latin, Greek and Christian theology in monasteries throughout Ireland. The arts of manuscript illumination, metalworking and sculpture flourished and produced such treasures as the Book of Kells, ornate jewelry, and the many carved stone crosses that can still be seen across the country.

**The Viking Era**

At the end of the 8th century and during the 9th century Vikings, from where we now call Scandinavia, began to invade and then gradually settle into and mix with Irish society. The Vikings founded, Dublin, Ireland’s capital city in 988. Following the defeat of the Vikings by Brian Boru, the High King of Ireland, at Clontarf in 1014, Viking influence faded.
The Norman Era
The 12th century saw the arrival of the Normans. The Normans built walled towns, castles and churches. They also increased agriculture and commerce in Ireland.

Plantations and Penal Laws
After King Henry VIII declared himself head of the Church in England in 1534 he ensured that the Irish Parliament declared him King of Ireland in 1541. From this time up to the late 17th century, an official English policy of ‘plantation’ led to the arrival of thousands of English and Scottish Protestant settlers. The most successful plantation occurred in Ulster. From this period on, sectarian conflict became a common theme in Irish history.

The 17th century was a bloody one in Ireland. It culminated in the imposition of the harsh regime of Penal Laws. These laws set about disempowering Catholics, denying them, for example, the right to take leases or own land above a certain value, outlawing Catholic clergy, forbidding higher education and entry to the professions, and imposing oaths of conformity to the state church, the Church of Ireland. During the 18th century strict enforcement of the Penal Laws eased but by 1778 Catholics held only about 5% of the land in Ireland.

Union with Great Britain
In 1782 a Parliamentary faction led by Henry Grattan (a Protestant) successfully agitated for a more favorable trading relationship with England and for greater legislative independence for the Parliament of Ireland. However, London still controlled much of what occurred in Ireland. Inspired by the French Revolution, in 1791 an organization called the United Irishmen was formed with the ideal of bringing Irish people of all religions together to reform and reduce Britain's power in Ireland. Its leader was a young Dublin Protestant called Theobald Wolfe Tone. The United Irishmen were the inspiration for the armed rebellion of 1798. Despite attempts at help from the French the rebellion failed and in 1801 the Act of Union was passed uniting Ireland politically with Britain.

In 1829 one of Ireland’s greatest leaders Daniel O'Connell, known as ‘the great liberator’ was central in getting the Act of Catholic Emancipation passed in the parliament in London. He succeeded in getting the total ban on voting by Catholics lifted and they could now also become Members of the Parliament in London.

After this success O'Connell aimed to cancel the Act of Union and re-establish an Irish parliament. However, this was a much bigger task and O'Connell's approach of non-violence was not supported by all. Such political issues were overshadowed however by the worst disaster and tragedy in Irish history – the great famine.

The Great Famine
Potatoes were the staple food of a growing population at the time. When blight (a form of plant disease) struck potato crops nationwide in 1845, 1846 and 1847 disaster followed. Potatoes were inedible and people began to starve to death. The response of the British government also contributed to the disaster – trade agreements were still controlled by London. While hundreds of thousands of people were suffering from extreme hunger, Ireland was forced to export abundant harvests of wheat and dairy products to Britain and further overseas.

Between 1845 and 1851 two million people died or were forced to emigrate from Ireland. The population of Ireland has never since reached its pre-famine level of approximately 8 million.

Ireland's history of emigration continued from this point onwards with the majority of Irish emigrants going to the United States of America.

Home Rule
There was little effective challenge to Britain’s control of Ireland until the efforts of Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-91). At the age of 31 he became leader of the Irish Home Rule Party, which became the Irish Parliamentary Party in 1882.
While Parnell did not achieve Home Rule (or self-government), his efforts and widely recognized skills in the House of Commons earned him the title of 'the uncrowned king of Ireland'. The impetus he gave to the idea of Home Rule was to have lasting implications.

In Ulster in the north of Ireland the majority of people were Protestants. They were concerned about the prospect of Home Rule being granted as they would be a Protestant minority in an independent Ireland with a Catholic majority. They favored the union with Britain. The Unionist Party was led by Sir Edward Carson. Carson threatened an armed struggle for a separate Northern Ireland if independence was granted to Ireland.

A Home Rule Bill was passed in 1912 but crucially it was not brought into law. The Home Rule Act was suspended at the outbreak of World War One in 1914. Many Irish nationalists believed that Home Rule would be granted after the war if they supported the British war effort. John Redmond the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party encouraged people to join the British forces and many did join. However, a minority of nationalists did not trust the British government leading to one of the most pivotal events in Irish history, the Easter Rising.

**Easter Rising**

On April 24 (Easter Monday) 1916, two groups of armed rebels, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army seized key locations in Dublin. The Irish Volunteers were led by Padraig Pearse and the Irish Citizen Army was led by James Connolly. Outside the GPO (General Post Office) in Dublin city center, Padraig Pearse read the Proclamation of the Republic which declared an Irish Republic independent of Britain. Battles ensued with casualties on both sides and among the civilian population. The Easter Rising finished on April 30th with the surrender of the rebels. The majority of the public was actually opposed to the Rising. However, public opinion turned when the British administration responded by executing many of the leaders and participants in the Rising. All seven signatories to the proclamation were executed including Pearse and Connolly.

Two of the key figures who were involved in the rising who avoided execution were Éamon de Valera and Michael Collins. In the December 1918 elections the Sinn Féin party led by Éamon de Valera won a majority of the Ireland based seats of the House of Commons. On the 21 January 1919 the Sinn Féin members of the House of Commons gathered in Dublin to form an Irish Republic parliament called Dáil Éireann, unilaterally declaring power over the entire island.

**War of Independence**

What followed is known as the 'war of independence' when the Irish Republican Army – the army of the newly declared Irish Republic – waged a guerilla war against British forces from 1919 to 1921. One of the key leaders of this war was Michael Collins. In December 1921 a treaty was signed by the Irish and British authorities. While a clear level of independence was finally granted to Ireland the contents of the treaty were to split Irish public and political opinion. One of the sources of division was that Ireland was to be divided into Northern Ireland (6 counties) and the Irish Free State (26 counties) which was established in 1922.

**Civil War**

Such was the division of opinion in Ireland that a Civil War followed from 1922 to 1923 between pro and anti treaty forces, with Collins (pro-treaty) and de Valera (anti-treaty) on opposing sides. The consequences of the Civil war can be seen to this day where the two largest political parties in Ireland have their roots in the opposing sides of the civil war – Fine Gael (pro-treaty) and Fianna Fáil (anti-treaty). A period of relative political stability followed the Civil war.

**Northern Ireland**

Under the same Government of Ireland Act of 1920 that created the Irish Free State, the Parliament of Northern Ireland was created. The Parliament consisted of a majority of Protestants and while there was relative stability for decades this was to come to an end in the late 1960s due to systematic discrimination against Catholics.
Northern Ireland’s Catholic civil rights marches in 1968 led to violent reactions from some Protestant loyalists and from the police force. What followed was a period known as ‘the Troubles’ when nationalist/republican and loyalist/unionist groups clashed.

In 1969 British troops were sent to Derry and Belfast to maintain order and to protect the Catholic minority. However, the army soon came to be seen as a tool of the Protestant majority by the minority Catholic community. This was reinforced by events such as Bloody Sunday in 1972 when British forces opened fire on a Catholic civil rights march in Derry killing 13 people. An escalation of paramilitary violence followed with many atrocities committed by both sides. The period of ‘the Troubles’ are generally agreed to have finished with the Belfast (or Good Friday) Agreement of April 10th 1998.

Between 1969 and 1998 it is estimated that well over 3,000 people were killed by paramilitary groups on opposing sides of the conflict.

Since 1998 considerable stability and peace has come to Northern Ireland. In 2007 former bitterly opposing parties the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Féin began to co-operate in government together in Northern Ireland.

Republic of Ireland – 20th Century to present day
The 1937 Constitution re-established the state as the Republic of Ireland.

In 1973 Ireland joined the European Economic Community (now the European Union).

In the 1980s the Irish economy was in recession and large numbers of people emigrated for employment reasons. Many young people emigrated to the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Australia.

Economic reforms in the 1980s along with membership of the European Community (now European Union) created one of the world’s highest economic growth rates. Ireland in the 1990s, so long considered a country of emigration, became a country of immigration. This period in Irish history was called the Celtic Tiger.

Source: [http://www.livinginireland.ie/en/culture_society/a_brief_history_of_ireland/]
St. Patrick's Day is celebrated annually on March 17, the anniversary of his death in the fifth century. The Irish have observed this day as a religious holiday for over 1,000 years. On St. Patrick's Day, which falls during the Christian season of Lent, Irish families would traditionally attend church in the morning and celebrate in the afternoon. Lenten prohibitions against the consumption of meat were waived and people would dance, drink and feast—on the traditional meal of Irish bacon and cabbage.

ST. PATRICK’S DEATH AND THE FIRST ST. PATRICK’S DAY PARADE
Saint Patrick, who lived during the fifth century, is the patron saint and national apostle of Ireland. Born in Roman Britain, he was kidnapped and brought to Ireland as a slave at the age of 16. He later escaped, but returned to Ireland and was credited with bringing Christianity to its people. In the centuries following Patrick's death (believed to have been on March 17, 461), the mythology surrounding his life became ever more ingrained in the Irish culture: Perhaps the most well-known legend is that he explained the Holy Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) using the three leaves of a native Irish clover, the shamrock.

Since around the ninth or 10th century, people in Ireland have been observing the Roman Catholic feast day of St. Patrick on March 17. Interestingly, however, the first parade held to honor St. Patrick's Day took place not in Ireland but in the United States. On March 17, 1762, Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched through New York City. Along with their music, the parade helped the soldiers reconnect with their Irish roots, as well as with fellow Irishmen serving in the English army.

GROWTH OF ST. PATRICK’S DAY CELEBRATIONS
Over the next 35 years, Irish patriotism among American immigrants flourished, prompting the rise of so-called “Irish Aid” societies like the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick and the Hibernian Society. Each group would hold annual parades featuring bagpipes (which actually first became popular in the Scottish and British armies) and drums.

In 1848, several New York Irish Aid societies decided to unite their parades to form one official New York City St. Patrick’s Day Parade. Today, that parade is the world’s oldest civilian parade and the largest in the United States, with over 150,000 participants. Each year, nearly 3 million people line the 1.5-mile parade route to watch the procession, which takes more than five hours. Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and Savannah also celebrate the day with parades involving between 10,000 and 20,000 participants each.

St. Patrick’s Day Celebration
- Corned beef and cabbage is a traditional St. Patrick's Day dish. In 2009, roughly 26.1 billion pounds of beef and 2.3 billion pounds of cabbage were produced in the United States.
- Irish soda bread gets its name and distinctive character from the use of baking soda rather than yeast as a leavening agent.
- Lime green chrysanthemums are often requested for St. Patrick’s Day parades and celebrations.
ST. PATRICK’S DAY PARADE

- More than 100 St. Patrick’s Day parades are held across the United States. New York City and Boston are home to the largest celebrations.
- At the annual New York City St. Patrick’s Day parade, participants march up 5th Avenue from 44th Street to 86th Street. Each year, between 150,000 and 250,000 marchers take part in the parade, which does not allow automobiles or floats.

PLACES TO SPEND ST. PATRICK’S DAY

- There are seven places in the United States named after the shamrock, the floral emblem of Ireland including Mount Gay-Shamrock, WV; Shamrock, TX; Shamrock Lakes, IN; and Shamrock, OK.
- Sixteen U.S. places share the name of Ireland’s capital, Dublin. With 44,541 residents, Dublin, CA, is the largest of the nice, followed by Dublin, OH, with 39,310.
- Other towns with the luck of the Irish include Emerald Isle, North Carolina and Irishtown, Illinois.

FACTS ABOUT IRISH AMERICANS

- There are 34.7 million U.S. residents with Irish ancestry. This number is more than seven times the population of Ireland itself.
- Irish is the nation’s second most frequently reported ancestry, ranking behind German.
- Across the country, 11 percent of residents lay claim to Irish ancestry. That number more than doubles to 23 percent in the state of Massachusetts.
- Irish is the most common ancestry in 54 U.S. counties, of which 44 are in the Northeast. Middlesex County in Massachusetts tops the list with 348,978 Irish Americans, followed by Norfolk County, MA, which has 203,285.
- Irish ranks among the top five ancestries in every state except Hawaii and New Mexico. It is the leading ancestry group in Delaware, Massachusetts and New Hampshire.
- There are approximately 144,588 current U.S. residents who were born in Ireland.

Source: https://www.history.com/topics/st-patricks-day
Irish Music: Experiences in Dance, Singing, and Instrument Playing

Designed by: Abigail Harvey
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https://folkways.si.edu/irish-experiences-dance-singing-instrument-playing/jigs-polka/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian

SUMMARY: Explore the world of Irish culture through playing, singing and dancing. Students will learn to differentiate styles of Irish music and start discussing the cultural context of song and dance.

- SUGGESTED GRADE LEVELS: 3-5
- COUNTRY: Ireland
- REGION: Northern Europe
- CULTURE GROUP: Irish
- GENRE: Jigs, Polkas
- INSTRUMENTS: Recorder, Percussion, Voice
- LANGUAGE: English
- CO-CURRICULAR AREAS: Social Studies, Dance
- NATIONAL STANDARDS: 1, 2, 6, 7, 9
- PREREQUISITES: For segment 3, students must know basic notes on recorder

OBJECTIVES:
- Perform two types of Irish folk dance
- Recognize traditional characteristics of Irish folk music
- Learn to sing and play an Irish polka tune

MATERIAL:
- “Lark in the Morning /Irish Washerwoman /Irish Washer Woman (medley)” by Tom Sullivan from On Deck and Below: Irish at Sea: Music of Western Ocean Packet (FW 03566)
- “Christmas Eve” by Tom Byrne and Tom McCaffrey from Irish Music from Cleveland, Vol. 2: The Community Tradition (FW03521)
- Orff instruments
- Recorders

1. Irish Folk Dance – Jig (National Standard 6)
2. Irish Folk Dance – Stew (National Standard 6)
3. Instrument Playing (National Standards 1, 2, 7, 9)
Lesson Segment #1: Irish Folk Dance – Jig

Objective:
- Perform an Irish folk dance to an Irish jig and move to the appropriate meter pattern (2/4)

Materials:
- “Lark in the Morning /Irish Washerwoman /Irish Washer Woman (medley)” by Tom Sullivan from *On Deck and Below: Irish at Sea: Music of Western Ocean Packet* (FW 03566)
- Space to move

Procedure:

a. Students listen to the medley listed above and pat the steady beat, alternating left and right hands.
b. Students form a circle (they can also be in a line or simply scattered, depending on your space).
c. Teacher performs the circle dance for students with the music (one time only).
   i. Tap heel toe, heel toe (right foot)
   ii. Tap heel toe, heel toe (left foot)
   1. Do parts a & b a total of eight times
   iii. Slide right four counts
   iv. Slide left four counts
   v. Walk forward four counts (then clap)
   vi. Walk backward four counts (then clap)
   vii. Repeat parts f & g two times; on last repeat (walking backwards), spin around once
d. Teacher performs the first segment of the dance (a & b); students “echo” this segment.
e. Teach each segment of the dance; remediate as needed.
f. Teacher performs entire dance without music for students; students “echo” with teacher counting.
g. Students and teacher perform entire dance with music; repeat until the end of the music!

Assessment:
- Teacher observes students; were they able to perform the various steps and maintain a steady beat?

Lesson Segment #2. Irish Folk Dance – Stew

Objective:
- Perform an Irish folk dance (stew) to a traditional Irish tune and maintain a steady beat

Materials:
- “The Girl I Left Behind Me/The Rakes of Mallow (medley)” by Ceilidh Band from *As I Roved Out (Field Trip-Ireland)* (FW08872)
- Space to move

Procedure:

a. Students listen to “The Girl I Left Behind Me/The Rakes of Mallow.”
b. Students form a circle (they can also be in a line or simply scattered, depending on your space).
c. Teacher performs the dance for students with the music (one time only).
i. Circle right (16 counts)
ii. Circle left (16 counts)
iii. Jump, jump, clap, clap (do this two times total)
iv. Walk forward (four counts)
v. Walk backward (four counts)

1. Repeat d & e one time

d. Teacher performs the first segment of the dance (a) for students; students “echo” teacher.
e. Teach each segment of the dance; remediate as needed.
f. Teacher performs entire dance without music for students; students “echo” with teacher counting.
g. Students and teacher perform entire dance with music; repeat until the end of the music!

**Assessment:**
- Teacher observes students; were they able to perform the various steps and maintain a steady beat?
Other Educational Resources:

ArtsEdge – *You're Invited to a Ceili: Exploring Irish Dance*
- Summary: In this lesson students will explore the world of Irish dance. They will listen to Irish music, learn about ceilis, which are festive dance celebrations, view the intricate costumes worn by Irish dancers, and listen to an Irish poem. After learning the steps to an Irish reel, the class will stage a dance performance.
- Link: [https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-3-4/Exploring_Irish_Dance#Overview](https://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-3-4/Exploring_Irish_Dance#Overview)

Brigham Young – *Creative Dance Integration Lesson Plans*
- Summary: This book provides a detailed description of my method of addressing the above problem: using dance to teach and supplement the required curriculum. Combining dance with other curriculum areas is a student-centered approach that helps kinesthetic learners to better understand required class material.
- Link: [https://education.byu.edu/sites/default/files/ARTS/documents/educational_movement.pdf](https://education.byu.edu/sites/default/files/ARTS/documents/educational_movement.pdf)

Scribd – *Irish Reel*
- Summary: The students will be able to perform the Irish Reel dance steps with proper form using correct body part and keeping pace with the music 2 out of 3 times.

Study.com - *Irish Dancing Lesson for Kids: Facts & History*
- Summary: Irish Dancing is a popular form of dancing across the nation of Ireland, and the world. In this lesson, find out about the history of Irish Dancing, as well as the different types of dances.
1. **What is the history of Irish dancing?**

2. **What are the different types of Irish dancing?**

3. **Describe some of the main components of Irish dancing.**

4. **Who was St. Patrick and why is St. Patrick's Day a holiday?**

5. **What are some other Irish traditions?**

6. **What are some cultural traditions you and your family practice?**

7. **Name some instruments traditionally used to perform Irish Music**

8. **Name 5 internationally renowned Irish writers (can be dramatists)**