Was The Great Irish Famine an Act of Nature?

PART ONE

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What Do We Know About Hunger?

BACKGROUND

Since the Great Irish Famine, there have been other major famines in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America. There was widespread famine in Africa and Asia and famine in Central and South America in the 1970s. In the 1990s, there were famines in Somalia (1992), North Korea (1999), and there was a famine in Ethiopia in 2000.

Note: Descriptions and photos of starvation used in this activity may be shocking and disturbing to students.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Korean Hungry Children

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Daly, Mary E. *The Famine in Ireland*. Dundalk: Dublin Historical Association, 1989.

Sen, Amartya. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Knopf, 1999.

Trócaire. *Famine. Causes, Prevention and Relief*. Blackrock: Trócaire, 1995.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the physical effects of starvation and treatment plans to treat starving children.

Design a Famine Alert page.

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.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

View history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments in world history.

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.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- think rationally about content
- consult and interpret databases
- identify premises

. participate in group activities
. synthesize information
. present information

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

Mathematics

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students how they feel when they are *really* hungry. Do their stomachs hurt? Do they feel tired? Do they feel sad? Do their heads ache? Do they feel cross or out of sorts? What do they think about when they are hungry? What would it be like if everyone in their house were hungry? What would it be like if everyone in the class were hungry? What would it be like if everyone they knew was hungry?

   Now ask students to imagine severe hunger with no end in sight: no food available, no resources for food, and neighbors who are also suffering. We use the term *famine* when we talk about a scarcity of food that is extreme and that extends through the entire population.

2. Ask students what they would do if food were scarce. When food is scarce it becomes more valuable and the price of food rises. What would students do to get the money to buy the higher-priced food? The Nobel economist Amartya Sen has discovered in his research on the famines in the 1940s in India that famine does not always coincide with a scarce food supply. It happened when the price of food is higher than the income of the poor. In other words, famine comes when food is scarce or when people's income is not sufficient to purchase food.

   What if there were no food to be had? Many people wander in search of food or of relief stations. People who are *really* hungry sometimes do things they would never do if they were not starving. Ask students what they would do if they were starving. Would they eat things like bird's eggs, nuts, berries, weeds (like dandelions), or grasses? During the Great Irish Famine, people's mouths were green from eating leaves and nettles. Would they eat things they would never consider, like raccoons, squirrels, dogs and cats?

3. Ask students to consider: If there were food, who would get it? Would students share it? Would they take what they need and then share it? Would some people be entitled to more than others? Would students share scarce food supplies with others? If one had something and others had nothing, what would one do? (Would students share their food supply?) Would some members of the household be considered entitled to more food? For example, if a family member were employed, would that person be entitled to more food? Some mothers sacrifice their portions for their children. Sometimes older people or sick people are given less. In some cultures, girls are given less than boys (Trócaire 16).

4. Ask students if they know about a famine in the world right now. Where is it? What caused it? Was it caused by natural causes: drought, crop failure, plant disease? During the Great Irish Famine, the potato plants, the main source of food in Ireland, were attacked and destroyed by a fungus. In 1844 the Irish had approximately 14,862 tons of potatoes. In 1845 there were approximately 10,063 tons of potatoes produced. In 1846 the potato crop was 2,999 tons; in 1847 it was 3,077 tons and in 1849 it was 4,024 tons (Daly 56). Ask students to graph the information and then explain the significance of the information. Students can compare their results and their conclusions.

   Is a current famine caused by a war? What is the relationship between war and famine? Does a country divert its resources from its people to its war efforts? Does a government have a responsibility to save its starving people?

5. Where do students learn about famine? Newspapers? News magazines? Radio? Television? Internet? Students can collect news clippings about a contemporary famine. (Note: Warn students that some of the pictures may be very graphic and disturbing.)

6. What happens to those who are starving? Ask students to look at the photograph of the mother and child from Somalia who are suffering from starvation. What are the symptoms of starvation? What happens to the body of someone who has been deprived of food for an extended period? What do students observe about the child's conditions? Students can investigate the clinical symptoms of starvation. What kind of treatment would medical personnel provide for the family in the photograph?

7. What can be done to prevent famine? Students can design a Famine Alert page for student readers of their local papers. (On Long Island, for example, *Newsday* had a Kidsday page for younger students and a Student Briefing Page for older students.)

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Why do you think the public around the world does not like to think about, talk about, or view pictures of starvation and famine? Besides being difficult to see, why does it make some people feel uncomfortable?

TEACHER REFLECTION

Students faced with the gravity of famine will ask what they can do to help. In addition to their Famine Alert pages, students can make the seriousness of famine known to a wider public through a letter writing campaign or a one-minute public service television spot.

Students can Trick or Treat for UNICEF or another humanitarian organization. Some students have organized a hunger meal (bowl of soup and piece of bread) with the school cafeteria and donated the difference between the cost of that meal and the usual cost of a day's meal to a world hunger organization.

Some of the information in this activity will be upsetting to students, so teachers must use their discretion about the materials.

Teachers may want to use this activity with *What Do We Know about Hunger* and *Famine in Somalia*.

Source: 1992, *Refugee Camp in Mogadishu* (Somalia). © A. Raffaele Ciriello 1992.

A Famine Timeline

BACKGROUND

What is a famine? What can cause the scarcity of food? Sometimes it happens during periods of war. Sometimes it happens because of politics, or because of a change in climate such as a drought or too much rain.

Or a famine may start with a disease that strikes the plants people use for food. That is what happened in Ireland.

A blight attacked the potatoes and the potato crop, the main food of the Irish poor, resulting in massive starvation and emigration from Ireland. The crop failed in 1845, 1846, 1848, and 1849. The population of Ireland was 8,175,124 in 1841; by 1851, it had dropped to 6,552,385. (The handout *The Irish Famine* in this activity provides more background information.)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Irish Famine

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Litton, Helen. *The Irish Famine: An Illustrated History.* Minneapolis: Irish Books and Media, 1994.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Map of Ireland

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Review background information on the Great Irish Famine and plot a timeline.

Identify key events and contributions in the chronology of the Great Irish Famine.

Comprehend how the Great Irish Famine affected the attitude of the Irish people towards hunger and homelessness.

Understand how the Great Irish Famine was affected by social, political, economic, and cultural events.

STANDARDS

ELA 1: Students will listen, speak, read, and write 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 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

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

Know some important historic events and developments of past civilizations.

Develop timelines that display important events and eras from world history.

Compare important events and accomplishments from different time periods in world history.

Develop timelines by placing important events and developments in world history in their correct chronological order.

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.

Gather and present information about important developments from world history.

Understand how the terms social, political, economic, and cultural can be used to describe human activities or practices.

Map information about people, places, and environments.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- analytical thinking
- consult and interpret databases
- ask and answer logical questions
- gather information
- interpret information and data
- reflect upon content/form opinions

PATTERNS TO ORGANIZE INFORMATION

Timeline

Categorizing the impact of the Irish Famine socially, politically, economically, and culturally

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Review the Handout *The Irish Famine*, emphasizing the chronology of events.

2. Using the Handout *The Irish Famine,* ask students to fill in the events of the timeline.

3. Discuss the following questions:

What caused the famine in Ireland?

What was the difference between good landlords and bad landlords? What did good landlords do?

Why didn't the Irish want to go into the workhouse? Some people preferred to become beggars and walk the roads of Ireland rather than live in the workhouse. It was a hard choice. What would you have done?

Many Irish left Ireland during the famine. Where did they go?

What did the Irish Quakers do to feed the poor?

How did New Yorkers help?

Was there a healthy potato crop any year between 1845-1850? Did it help to relieve the famine?

How did American friends of the Irish get supplies to Ireland?

How long did the famine last?

Why would the Irish be generous to others suffering from hunger and homelessness?

4. Discuss how the Irish Famine affected Ireland in the following ways:

social (e.g., school fundraising)

political (e.g., government sending girls to Australia)

economic (e.g,. rent reduction)

cultural (e.g., Irish attitude toward homelessness)

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Create a matching timeline of events occurring in the United States at the same time.

The Irish Famine handout states "...but the effects of the famine continued even longer." Describe what those effects might have been socially, politically, economically, and culturally.

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity is designed to help students establish a timeframe for the Great Irish Famine and to develop a chronology of events within the famine years. It provides a historical context for famine fiction like *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* and *Under the Hawthorne Tree*, discussed in other activities in this curriculum (see Table of Contents). This can be done as a listening exercise with students answering questions based on the information they have heard.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

Research the actual long-term consequences of the Great Irish Famine, providing documentation created by historians, storytellers, artists, and other groups that kept records and made observations.

The Irish Famine

In 1845, the Irish potato crop was attacked by a blight that caused potato plants to rot. Since the Irish lived mainly on potatoes, there was very little to eat. The cost of food became very expensive and what little money people had did not go very far. Many people died of sickness, fevers caused by famine conditions, and some died of hunger.

Often, poor people could not pay the rent on their little houses. Some landlords were kind and reduced their rents or gave their tenants more time to pay. Others were not kind and put the poor tenants out and destroyed their houses. Those who lost their homes had to find another place to live. Some lived the life of the homeless and traveled the roads begging. Some went to a workhouse that was almost like a prison; the rules were very strict. The workhouse was very crowded, so disease spread very quickly among the residents. The worst thing was that families were separated when they entered the workhouse, and they were allowed very little contact with one another.

People who had some money saved, or had families to help them, decided that they would leave Ireland rather than stay and face starvation. Most who left Ireland came to North America, to Canada, and especially to the United States, but some went as far as Australia. (In 1848, the government offered a plan to send young girls living in Irish workhouses to Australia).

The government did not do enough to help the Irish, so Irish, American and British groups of private citizens started organizations that helped the Irish during the famine. In Ireland, the Quakers (Society of Friends) started the Central Relief Committee in 1846. They opened soup shops to help feed the poor. In the spring of 1847, New Yorkers started the Irish Relief Committee that sent shiploads of food and supplies to the poor. Everyone helped: religious groups, workers and school children. (The boys of Ward School #3 gave $1.64.) There was contribution to the Irish Relief Committee from the Choctaw Nation. In Boston, schoolchildren sent their contribution for Irish poor to the Irish author Maria Edgeworth, whose works included books for young people.

In 1849, when the British government said the famine was over, Queen Victoria visited Ireland. Everyone thought that her visit meant it was time to think of the future; however, the potato crop which had failed in 1845, 1846, and 1848, failed once more in 1849. Famine conditions lasted in some places until 1852, but the effects of the famine continued even longer. Irish people continued to leave the country in large numbers until the middle of the twentieth century, and over the years the Irish people have been among the most generous to others who have suffered from hunger and homelessness.

Source: Maureen Murphy. *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum* Committee.

Mapping the Potato Blight

BACKGROUND

The Dublin Evening Post reported the first appearance of the potato blight on Sept. 9, 1845. The fields were green; the potato crop looked healthy; however, suddenly—overnight—the fields turned black and there was an overpowering, sickening smell of rot. Experts were puzzled by the cause of the blight. They thought the fungus that attacked the potato plant was the result of the disease; later, botanists realized that the fungus itself, *phytophthora infestans*, was the cause. Realizing the seriousness of the situation, the British government directed the local police to file weekly reports describing the extent of the potato crop loss.

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *Dramatic Monologue: The Discovery of the Blight* and *Poetry and Painting in "At a Potato Digging."*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Return Showing the Proportion of Actual Crop Lost

Ireland

Spud Blight

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Kennedy, Liam, Paul S. Ell, E.M. Crawford, and L.A. Clarkson. *Mapping the Great Irish Famine. A Survey of the Famine Decades*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999.

Kissane, Noel. *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History*. Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995, pp.30-31.

Cooke, Robert. "Return of the Potato Killer," *Newsday*, May 30, 2000, pp. 8-9.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Colored pencils, crayons or markers

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Analyze a chart depicting data related to crop lost in Ireland.

Draw conclusions based on the data.

Analyze the impact of crop loss and make recommendations.

Design maps depicting data related to crop loss.

STANDARDS

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.

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

MST 1: Students will use mathematical analysis, scientific inquiry, and engineering design, as appropriate to pose questions, seek answers, and develop solutions.

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

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

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

Map information about people, places, and environments.

Understand how to develop and use maps and other graphic representations to display geographic issues, problems, and questions.

Interpret and analyze information from textbooks and nonfiction books.

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

Interpret geographic information by synthesizing data and developing conclusions and generalizations about geographic issues and problems.

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.

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

Investigate how production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of goods and services are economic decisions with which all societies and nations must deal.

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 considerations.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- analytical thinking
- evaluate and connect evidence
- inquire, question, probe
- draw conclusions
- consult and interpret databases
- take and defend positions
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- identify premises and rationale for points of view
- present information
- participate in group activities
- consult and interpret primary sources

PATTERNS TO ORGANIZE INFORMATION

Chart analysis to identify patterns

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Discuss the importance of charting the potato crop loss in Ireland in 1845 and analyze the handout *Return Showing the Proportion of Actual Crop Lost.* The numbers represent the electoral divisions (voting districts within the county).

   Thirty-one of Ireland's thirty-two counties reported some percentage of potato crop losses in at least one electoral division. Only one county failed to provide any information. Which county?

   Which county represented the highest crop loss in four of its electoral divisions?

   What percentage of loss was most frequently reported? List the counties that reported electoral divisions with that percentage of cross loss.

   Which two counties reported the least amount of loss? What was the percentage of crop loss?

   Ask students to design their own color code for the information about farm loss and mark their county maps to indicate the highest reported percentage of crop loss in each county.

   Which county reported the most serious loss? Which counties reported losses in one or more electoral district greater than 70 percent?

2. Ask students to choose one province (Ulster, Munster, Leinster, or Connaught) and graph the reports by decile (tenth) from the counties of that province.

3. Ask students to design maps that show the extent of damage from blight in this early report to the government. They can choose how they will represent the extent of loss (1/10, 2/10, 3/10) and make keys to their maps that indicate loss. (They can leave blank the counties that did not report losses.)

4. Based on the chart analysis and mapping of data, ask students to discuss their conclusions and recommendations. Small groups can meet to compare observations.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Using information from the chart and from the maps made to represent the highest percentage of crop loss in each Irish county, report conclusions that you have drawn from the first reports of the percentage of the 1845 potato crop loss.

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity assists students in seeing how empirical data can often result in action taken, even though visitors to Ireland could have seen evidence of the impact of the potato blight.

Students may be able to map the blight closer to home. On May 30, 2000, *Newsday* devoted the cover story of its "Health & Discovery" section to a report of a new strain of *phytophthora infestans*, also known as late blight fungus, that destroyed potato crops during the Great Irish Famine. It resists fungicides, so plant scientists are trying to develop new resistant varieties. The handouts *Spud Blight* and *Late Blight Cycle* show the extent of crop damage to fields, leaves, and potatoes and the way the fungus attacks and destroys the plants.

Students may want to follow up on this story with an investigation of whether there have been any local potato crop damage due to *phytophthora infestans*. Local 4-H extension officers would be resource people to consult.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

If students were members of the British government responsible for making the decision about how to handle the blight, how would they determine where to give their attention first? How would they arrive at their decisions? Write memoranda outlining priorities by county, using information from the chart to support recommendations.

Return showing the proportion of actual crop lost.

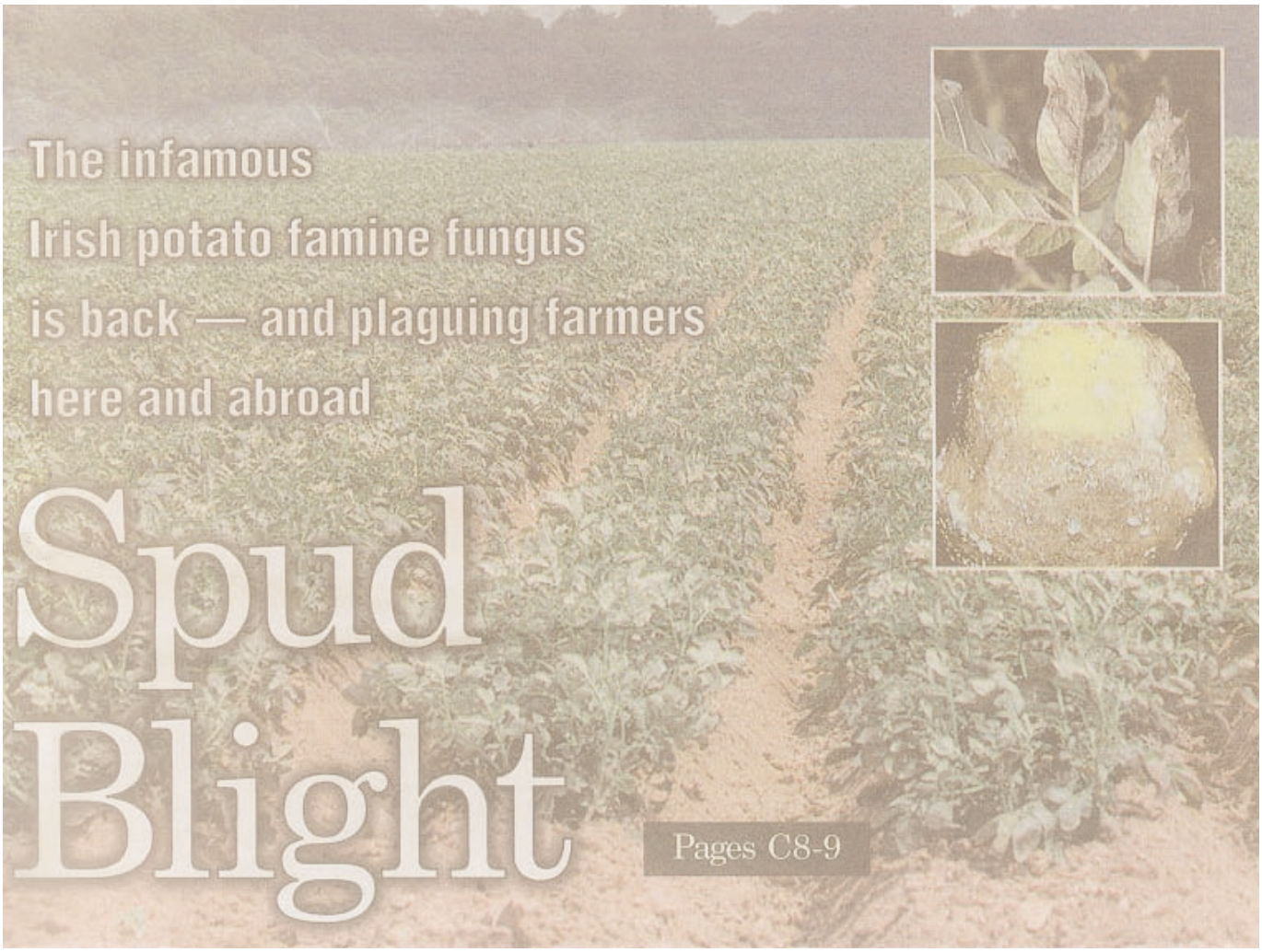
		Proportion of actual crop lost in electoral divisions											Number of electoral divisions not yet returned	Total number of electoral divisions
		None	Not Exceeding	Exceeding										
				1/10	2/10	3/10	4/10	5/10	6/10	7/10	8/10	9/10		
				Not Exceeding										
			1/10	2/10	3/10	4/10	5/10	6/10	7/10	8/10	9/10	10/10		
Ulster	Antrim	...	...	...	4	35	50	8	20	11	4	...	...	132
	Armagh	...	...	3	11	24	6	...	...	...	...	...	...	44
	Cavan	...	...	...	5	5	10	...	...	3	...	...	23	46
	Donegal	3	7	20	13	29	21	...	...	3	...	...	1	103
	Down	...	...	4	16	40	27	2	4	3	...	...	...	96
	Fermanagh	...	18	4	6	8	3	...	4	...	...	...	...	43
	Londonderry	...	11	...	29	17	24	...	1	4	...	...	...	86
	Monaghan	...	3	5	2	11	17	2	15	6	...	...	...	61
	Tyrone	4	53	22	15	11	23	...	2	2	...	...	...	132
Munster	Clare	...	...	3	1	11	25	...	10	4	...	...	...	54
	Cork	...	...	16	25	91	43	...	2	1	...	...	...	178
	Kerry	...	2	3	13	29	15	...	4	1	...	...	...	67
	Limerick	1	...	5	9	19	25	...	9	5	...	...	...	73
	Tipperary	1	...	12	15	33	63	1	7	5	...	...	...	137
	Waterford	...	...	...	3	4	18	...	9	14	...	...	1	49
Leinster	Carlow	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	14	14
	Dublin	...	2	3	4	12	8	...	1	8	...	...	1	39
	Kildare	...	4	6	7	29	4	...	1	1	...	...	...	52
	Kilkenny	...	...	...	...	9	19	...	6	...	...	...	...	34
	King's [Offaly]	...	...	2	4	19	6	...	1	...	...	...	21	53
	Longford	...	...	5	6	10	11	...	2	...	...	...	...	34
	Louth	...	...	...	4	4	23	...	3	10	...	...	...	44
	Meath	...	...	2	11	11	27	1	3	7	...	...	...	62
	Queen's [Laois]	...	2	...	5	11	5	1	3	...	...	...	...	27
	Westmeath	...	...	1	7	3	6	1	1	...	...	...	26	45
	Wexford	...	1	5	9	20	18	...	4	...	...	...	...	57
	Wicklow	...	1	6	10	17	6	...	2	...	...	...	...	42
Connaught	Galway	...	1	5	6	26	31	...	6	1	...	...	...	76
	Leitrim	...	...	3	8	15	11	...	...	1	...	...	...	38
	Mayo	...	3	12	11	6	15	...	3	1	...	...	12	63
	Roscommon	...	2	...	1	20	25	...	2	2	...	...	...	52
	Sligo	...	...	...	9	3	11	...	...	...	...	...	...	23
	Gross Total	9	110	153	269	582	596	16	125	93	4	...	99	2056

(*Correspondence explanatory of the measures adopted by H.M. government for the relief of distress* ... p. 36; P.P. 1846 (735) XXXVII.)

Source: Noel Kissane, **The Irish Famine, A Documentary History**.
Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995. p. 31.
Used with permission of the author and the National Library of Ireland.

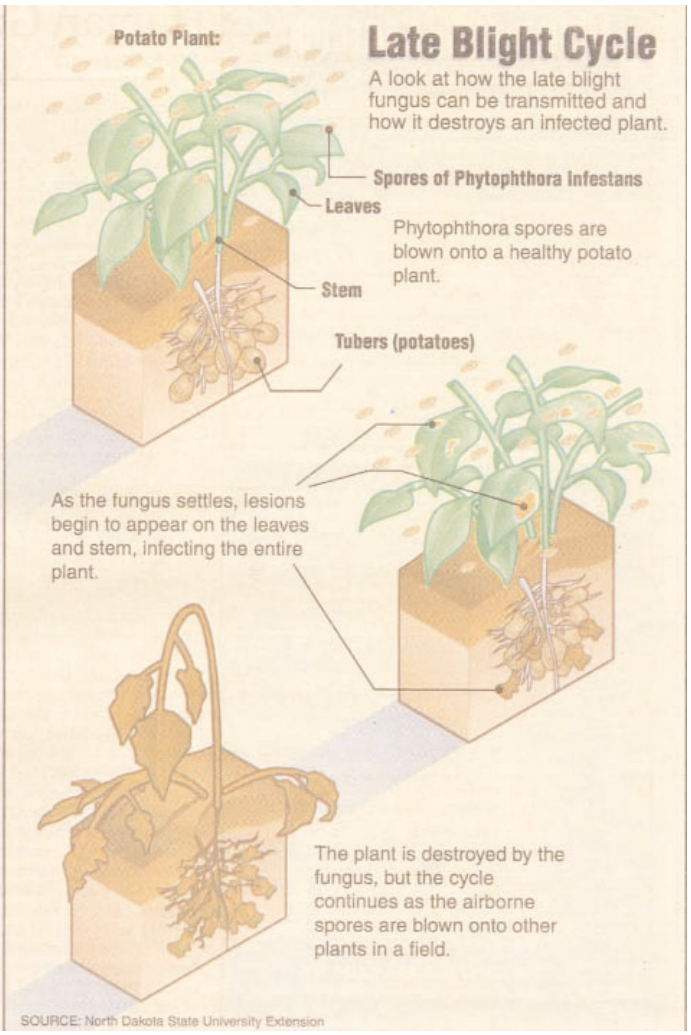
Political Geography of Ireland: Present County Divisions

Source: Ruth Dudley Edwards. *An Atlas of Irish History.* London: Metheun, 1981, pp 14. Permission pending.


The infamous
Irish potato famine fungus
is back — and plaguing farmers
here and abroad
Spud
Blight
Pages C8-9

Cornell University Photos

Back with a vengeance, the late blight fungus has sent potato researchers scrambling for ways to counter its chemical resistance, primarily by genetic manipulation.



Source: *Newsday*. May 39, 2000. C1,9. © 2000 *Newsday, Inc.* Reprinted with permission.

Dramatic Monologues: The Discovery of the Potato Blight

BACKGROUND

Daniel McDonald (1821-1853), creator of the painting, *The Discovery of the Potato Blight in Ireland* lived during the Great Irish Famine when a disease called *blight* destroyed the country's potato crop. Potatoes were the main food source for many families in rural Ireland. Crop failure meant the threat of starvation. The first blight appeared in 1845. The potato crop also failed in 1846, 1848, and 1849. By then, the population of Ireland had declined from 8,175,124 (1841) to 6,552,385 (1851). (See activities on *Mapping the Potato Blight* and *A Chronology of Irish History Through 1949* for related learning experiences.)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Discovery of the Potato Blight in Ireland

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Barnet, Sylvan. *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*. Boston: Little Brown, 1981.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Art supplies

Props created by students

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Comprehend the emotional, physical, economic, and social impact of the discovery of the potato blight.

Identify the emotional responses of the Irish as they discovered the blight, and the reasons for the responses.

Incorporate the analysis of a period painting into a script that depicts the painting's message.

Create and perform dramatic monologues based on interpretations of Daniel McDonald's painting, *The Discovery of the Potato Blight in Ireland*.

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 evolution.

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, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (Theatre)

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

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. (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.

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.

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

Gather and interpret information from children's reference books, magazines, textbooks, electronic bulletin boards, audio and media presentations, oral interviews, and from such sources as charts, graphs, maps and diagrams.

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

Present information clearly in a variety of oral and written forms such as summaries, paraphrases, brief reports, stories, posters, and charts.

Select a focus, organization, and point of view for oral and written presentations.

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

Write stories, poems, literary essays, and plays that observe the conventions of the genre and contain interesting and effective language and voice.

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

Write monologues and scenes to communicate ideas and feelings.

Use school and community resources, including library/media centers, museums and theatre professionals, as part of the artistic process leading to production.

Evaluate the use of other art forms in a theatre production.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- observe and conclude
- probe ideas and assumptions
- develop reflective thinking
- draw conclusions
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- present information
- participate in interpersonal group activities
- communicate results of research projects
- interpret information and data
- make decisions about process
- reflect upon content/form opinions

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

English Language Arts

Music

Drama

Student-centered teaching and learning

Visit art museums to view paintings that depict scenes in history

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Ask students to:

1. Examine Daniel McDonald's painting *The Discovery of the Potato Blight in Ireland*. Potatoes were the only food source for the poor in rural Ireland. Crop failure meant starvation. Describe the scene when the potatoes were uncovered and found to be destroyed by blight. Who are the speakers? What do they say to each other? What feelings are they expressing? How do you know their reactions? Why are they reacting the way that they are? When do you think McDonald painted this picture? Was it when the blight first appeared? Was it later? When?

   Look at the colors of the painting. Has McDonald painted the potato pit and the potatoes in a special way? What is their hue (color)? We say that yellow as a hue has a high value because it is a light color. If yellow is really yellow, we say it is saturated or has high saturation (Barnet 35-36). Using the term hue, value and saturation, describe the way McDonald painted the potatoes.

   Describe the subject of the painting. What is happening? What is the relationship between the people in the picture and the landscape? Does the landscape look threatening? Does the way the landscape looks make the blight more (or less) of a surprise? Why? How are the figures related to each other? Do they share the same feelings? Are they equally important?

   Discuss the composition of the painting. Is there any significance to the way McDonald places the figures? Does their arrangement form a larger shape? Discuss the images in the painting. Who is the older man in the picture? What is he doing? Could he be a symbol? If so, what does he symbolize? Look at the expressions on the faces of the other figures. Are they worried? Frightened? Sad? Hopeful?

2. Ask students to prepare a monologue for each person in the painting, either by writing a script or by meeting in small groups of six to discuss the words of the figures in the painting. In the groups, assign the figures in the painting: old man, man in the foreground, man in the background, woman looking into the potato pit, woman with her head on her arm, child. A narrator can also reflect on the future impact on the individuals and on the entire family.

   After creating written monologues, each group will be asked to perform their monologues, or share the conclusions of the group about each member of the painting.

   Remind students that their characters are speaking at a critical moment in history. What has happened? Do the characters realize the significance of the moment? What is going through each character's mind? What does each character's speech reveal about his/her character? Monologues may be in poetry or in prose. Student monologues must be at least thirty lines long.

3. Groups can present their monologues to the class beginning with a tableau of the painting. Students can take up the positions of the figures in the painting and can hold their positions while each speaker in turn steps forward to speak his/her monologue. Speakers can give their monologues and return to position. Groups can decide the order of their speakers. The class can design a common set, but groups can choose their own costumes.

TEACHER REFLECTION

In this activity, students will have the opportunity to take on the role of an interpreter of an historic moment by assuming the identity of one of the figures in the painting. Emphasis should not be on the acting ability of the students, but on their understanding of the personal impact on the Irish when they discovered the potato blight.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For younger and advanced students:

Students can create their own illustrations, poetry, journal entries, and/or newspaper articles that depict the initial reaction to discovering the potato blight.

The Discovery of the Potato Blight in Ireland

Source: Daniel McDonald.Used with permission of the Department of Irish Folklore, University College, Dublin.

Bad News From The Village: Famine in Rural Ireland

BACKGROUND

In the first year of the Great Irish Famine, fall 1845-1846, Sir Robert Peel headed the British government. To meet the emergency, Peel authorized the purchase of American corn, a food that did not interfere with the protected British agricultural market. The government passed a Public Works Bill that created work for an able-bodied member of poor households. Though there were not effective medical means to treat people who were ill with famine-related diseases, the government created fever hospitals to isolate the sick. Finally, they established food depots in the areas where the need was greatest.

The government changed in 1846. Sir John Russell replaced Peel, and he remained in office for the rest of the Great Irish Famine. When the crop failed a second time in the fall of 1846, it was clear that what had been a blight was now a famine. The 1845 blight destroyed about 30 percent of the crop; the 1846 blight destroyed almost the entire crop. Since the potatoes were destroyed, people had to buy food and raised money by selling their livestock and all their possessions, even their bed clothes.

Under Russell, the government was much less responsive. It did not intervene to prevent individuals speculating in the price of food from making a profit on those who starved, nor did they stop other food sources like oats from leaving the country.

Teachers may want to share the information found in the activity *The Irish in New York City in 1855* before discussing the O'Connor family's emigration to New York.The essays found in the beginning of this curriculum also provide valuable background information. (See the section in the beginning of the curriculum titled *Background Reading and Student Activities*.)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Bad News From the Village (includes vocabulary of Irish words)

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Branson, Karen. *The Potato Eaters*. New York: Putnam, 1979.

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

Kissane, Noel. *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History.* Dundalk: Dublin Historical Association, 1986.

Litton, Helen. *The Irish Famine*. Minneapolis: Irish Books and Media, 1994.

O'Gráda, Cormac. *The Great Irish Famine*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1989.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Art supplies for drawing

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Create illustrations and skits of scenes from *Bad News From the Village.*

Describe the predictions about the O'Connor family's future.

Explain how a story like *Bad News From the Village* teaches about history.

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.

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.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Explore narrative accounts of important events from world history to learn about different accounts of the past and 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.

Present information clearly in a variety of oral and written forms.

Recognize different levels of meaning.

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

Present personal responses to literature that makes reference to the plot, characters, ideas, vocabulary, and text structure.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- draw conclusions
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- ask and answer logical questions
- interpret information
- reflect upon content/Form opinions
- make generalizations

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Maureen O'Connor is a 13-year-old girl who lives in County Cork with her parents, her two brothers and her younger sister. It is the autumn of 1846, the second year of the Great Irish Famine. The potato crop has failed for the second year in a row and the O'Connors are struggling to survive.

Ask students to begin reading the handout *Bad News From the Village*. What time of day does the chapter begin? What is the setting? It is a sunny day? Is it light or dark out? What about that circling blackbird? Is it a good sign? How does the setting make the reader feel? Ask students to illustrate the opening scene. How might they make their illustrations reflect the mood of the story?

2. The O'Connors grow oats, but they have to sell their oats to get the money to pay their landlord for their little plot of land. Food is getting scarce and people are gathering in market towns like Ballyvourney to

try to get food. Soldiers have been stationed in the towns to protect the food that is being exported. Why is Michael Coyle angry? What does he think is going to happen?

Why are people selling their tools? If farmers don't have tools, what will happen?

3. Donegon is a local shopkeeper. People are selling their tools to him to buy grain. They have to buy food because their potatoes are ruined. How does Donegon look at the line of people? How do you think he will treat the poor people selling their tools? Will he give them the best price he can to help them or will he pay them very little for their tools and charge them high prices for the grain? Later in the chapter, readers will see how Donegon treated Sean O'Connell. Ask students to create a skit involving several people in line waiting to sell their tools to Donegon. What do they say to each other? What are their hopes? What do they fear? They have had one hungry winter already. What lies ahead? What do they say to each other about Donegon? What does each say to Donegon when he or she gets to the head of the line. How does each try to get the best deal? What does Donegon say to each in turn? (Students will need a real villain to play Donegon.)

   Note: In good times the O'Connors would have fed the skins of their potatoes to their pig. They would have taken good care of their pig so that when it was grown, it could be sold for a good price. The money would have helped with the rent and bought a few things for the family: cloth, boots, seed.

4. Michael Coyle talks of leaving Ireland. Why? It was true that in the second year of the Great Irish Famine many farmers decided to sell what they had and leave for North America or for England. Other people, like old Eamon, believed in staying and trying to survive as best they could. Ask students what they would have done.

   Maureen has heard her father and the other men say many times, "If the land was ours again." They mean two things: if the land they farmed was their own and if the land of Ireland belonged to the Irish, not the English. In the course of the later history of Ireland, the Irish secured the rights to own their own land. (They had to buy it back from their landlords.) An independent Ireland followed.

5. What happened when the O'Connors' landlord raised the rents of the O'Connors and their neighbors? Why were praties (potatoes) a good crop to grow? Why did they call rows of potato plants *lazy beds*?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Predict whether you think the O'Connells will leave Ireland. Take on the roles of the O'Connells' neighbors who have already emigrated to New York. They have heard that Sean O'Connell and Michael Coyle are thinking of leaving Ireland. They will write to Sean and Mary O'Connell giving them their advice. Pretend that you are writing that letter.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Teachers who field-tested this activity suggest giving an overview of conditions in Ireland during the Famine and information about New York in the mid-1800s. What happened when the potato crop failed for a second year? The *Bad News From the Village* chapter includes a number of important details that explain why Irish and Irish-American are deeply critical of Sir John Russell's government's response to the crisis: a free market economic philosophy that allowed food to leave the country while people starved and that did not introduce other food sources for those entirely dependent on potatoes. Students also see that some Irish people like the gombeen shopkeeper Donegon profited from his neighbors' misfortune. Finally, students will see the dilemma facing many small tenant farmers: should they stay on in Ireland and hope for the best?

In field trials, students enjoyed role playing and predicting what would happen next.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

For advanced students:

Write a chapter describing life for the O'Connor family after emigrating to New York. Was life better for them? Were problems challenging but not as life-threatening? Were they sad or pleased they had emigrated to New York?

In some of the field sites, teachers had students illustrate the text as another way to assess the understanding of the material.

Bad News from the Village

from Karen Branson, *The Potato Eaters*

Vocabulary

Alanna	child
Beetle	potato masher
Blight	a fungus that causes potatoes to rot while still in the ground
Champ	potatoes mashed with butter, milk and chopped onions
Come-all-ye	a ballad
Da	father
Hearth	fireplace
Hob	a shelf at the back or side of the fireplace where things can be put to warm
Gombeen	money lender who charges very high interest
Ma, Mammy	mother
Praties	potatoes
Ree-raa	games-wild games (noisy, unruly)
Rosary	a string of beads used by Roman Catholics during prayers
Whist	listen

From the cottage window Maureen could see the afternoon sun sinking low in the wide Irish sky. The lengthening shadows of the Cooley Hills now darkened the land, and a solitary blackbird circled overhead.

"You'll not be finding your supper out there," she told the bird, "for our oats are harvested and on their way to England. Can you fly that far, do you think?"

As if in answer, the blackbird dipped its wings, flew high over the empty fields, and began heading towards the east.

"Aye, then, and safe journey," the girl murmured. "To have wings would be grand indeed."

"Eh, Maureen? Is it your da and the boys? Sure it's time they were rounding the bend."

Her mother bent over the hearth where a black kettle hissed on the fire.

"Oh, Mammy, I'm not certain." Maureen's eyes returned to the rolling green countryside. Squinting into the sun, she could see some movement far down the road.

"Oh, aye, it's the three of them coming now." Maureen looked more closely. "And would that be the Coyles walking along with them?"

"Well, see that you give out a warning word before they come in and wake the little one." Mary O'Connor cast a look at the small child lying on the room's one bed. "She's sleeping at last, thanks be to God."

Maureen nodded. Her sister Rosheen looked like a bird nestled in the corner of the bed. Maureen tiptoed over and tucked a blanket around the feverish body.

"Aye, Ma, she's resting peaceful."

Voices could be heard and Maureen hurried to the cottage door. Their neighbors, old Eamon Coyle and his son Michael, were talking to Da.

She ran outside. Her bare feet followed the road ruts worn smooth by the wheels of hauling-carts. Brian and Padraic saw their sister coming.

"Maureen! There's soldiers in Ballyvourney! Lots of them, come all the way from England!" Padraic shouted. "one had a horse finer even than Lord Burnleigh's."

Ballyvourney is crowded with people," Brian added, "more than at fairtime." The boy's face was serious. "And 'twas not for any celebration. Da said there's man from the countryside seeking food."

Maureen looked up as her father and two neighbors approached. Michael Coyle's face was angry as he talked to Da. Old Eamon leaned heavily on his blackthorn cane, slowly moving himself along the road.

"Maureen alanna," Sean O'Connor greeted his daughter.

She took hold of his large, rough hand. “Mammy sent me to meet you. Hello, Eamon. And greetings to you, Michael.”

Eamon Coyle stopped walking and reached his hand up to his head, tipping his cap and bowing slightly to Maureen. "My dear lady, ‘tis indeed a pleasure," he said, a droll smile coming to the wrinkled face.

Maureen fell into step with her father. “Da, Rosheen just now fell asleep. The whole day she’s been tossing with fever. Ma said you’re to come in quiet, so’ not to waken her.”

“Aye, girl.” Her father whistled to the boys, who had run on down the road. “Brian! Padraic! No ree-raa or noise-making. Let your sister be.”

The boys waved and ran out.

“I’m sure of it!” Michael Coyle resumed his conversation. “Things will get much worse! Those people at Donegon’s today, selling their tools in order to buy grain. What will they plant with come spring? And did you see the look of Donegon, his greedy eyes on that long line? We’ll all be owing him before the winter is out!”

“Aye,” Sean said quietly. “Well, I’ve still the potato beds in the far field to dig, and their vines have been healthy.” He gave Maureen’s hand a gentle squeeze. “It will be a lean winter again, but we’ll get by.”

Maureen knew Da was worried. For the second year now, many of their potatoes were soft and within a few days had turned black with mold. Even Donal, their pig, could not eat them.

The same thing had happened to the Coyles, and the Dunnes, and to others across the countryside. Some beds were hit worse than others. It was rumored that further north entire fields had yielded nothing but rotted potatoes.

They were nearly at the cottage. “Now if I might light my pipe from your fire, Sean, I’ll arrive home a happy man.” Eamon Coyle nodded towards the door.

Maureen smiled at the old man, knowing he wished more than a hot coal for his pipe. He no doubt had a story to tell Ma, something he’d seen in Ballyvourney that Da might not think to mention. The color of a bolt of cloth at the draper’s, perhaps, or news from Eileen, Michael’s wife.

With his father out of earshot, Michael’s voice became more urgent. “The old man won’t listen when I say there’s no future for us here. Every year we break our backs sending oats and wheat to an English landlord! If we own a cow or a pig, do we get the milk or the bacon? No! It’s off to the village to trade them for a plow or pair of boots so we can start all over again! And now the praties are failing us!” He pointed to the fields that lay between the O’Connors’ cottage and his own. “There’s nothing else to eat out there, Sean!”

Michael suddenly became aware of Maureen standing next to her father. “Och,” he said, shaking his head, “I’d not meant to go on so.”

Maureen’s mouth felt dry. She had heard Michael Coyle talk of leaving Ireland before, especially since he married Eileen. Two of his brothers had gone to Liverpool and were said to have good jobs. But Eamon was too stubborn to leave, Michael said, and he couldn’t leave his father to work the land alone.

Eamon now stood in the doorway, a column of smoke curling from his pipe. Ma was with him, her hand on his arm in a comforting manner.

Michael spoke to Sean in a low voice. “Get those beds dug soon and store the praties well. Even our good ones had dark spots.”

“Aye, Michael tomorrow, Pray God all will be well.” Eamon hobbled down the path to the road. He stopped in front of Maureen and regarded her seriously. “Mind now, girl, that you don’t be sweeping towards the door when you’re cleaning the house! Sure then your good luck gets swept out, along with the dirt!” his eyes twinkled as he doffed his hat.

The old man turned towards Sean. “Remember, my friend, Ireland has had bad times before. But see there," he pointed to the far-off hills, “how the heather still grows on Ben Garron, and the grasses are laid low by the wind?” Eamon took a long draw on his pipe. “Life goes on,” he said, but his eyes avoided those of his son.

“Aye,” Sean replied. "And “'twas fine indeed walking from the village with you, for it’s your stories that do shorten the miles.”

“God bless you,” Mary called softly from the doorway. “My love to Eileen.” “God bless, Mary,” Michael called back.

“Maureen," Ma said, "the boys have gone to fetch Donal. Finish with the praties and give him the peelings.”

“Aye, Mammy.”

Ma would be anxious to hear about Da’s trip in to Ballyvourney. Maureen hoped they would come inside to talk so

she could hear, too.

"The little one?" Da asked. "She's better?"

"Aye, Sean, but her head still aches. And she's eaten almost nothing since yesterday noon."

Ma gave a short cough as if something had caught in her throat. "Come inside, for there's a chill in that wind. And sure you've need of a place to sit after your long walk."

Maureen put the last potato into the kettle. She poked at the fire, in no hurry to gather up the peelings for Donal. Was Da going to tell Mammy about the soldiers in the village and about what Michael had said?

Da always looked so big standing beside Mammy. He had broad shoulders and large, coarse hands; Mammy was small and delicate. Da's eyes were blue, and he had a stock of sandy hair that blew every which way in the wind. Mammy's hair was like Maureen's, long and nearly black. Her skin was smooth and white, not rough and weathered like Da's.

Still, thought Maureen, Da had a gentleness about him. There was a softness in his eyes and in his voice, even though when he sang a "come-all-ye" the crockery on the shelf was set to quivering.

Now he paced up and down the narrow distance between the bed and the door. He rubbed his hand nervously along his chin, looking first at Ma, then Maureen, then at little Rosheen asleep on the bed.

"Ah, woman," he said at last, "times are bad. They're telling now it's a blight for certain and has spread across the whole of Ireland. There's already people wandering the streets in Ballyvourney, desperate for food. They're trading anything they have for a sack of grain."

Sean paused at the window. "If only I had half of what I sent to England this year, we'd have plenty to eat."

"Padraic said there were English soldiers in the village," Maureen added in a hesitant voice.

Da resumed his pacing. "Aye! Soldiers guarding the granaries, soldiers out at the mill! Armed soldiers riding with the wagons taking our oats into Cork harbor!"

Mary raised her hands to quiet her husband, nodding in Rosheen's direction. "Whist, Sean! Now you've had a long day, and the boys must be near to fainting. We've food enough for now, and the beds in the far field will surely yield good praties."

"Aye, Mammy!" Maureen quickly began scooping the mound of potato peelings into her outstretched apron skirt.

She followed her father out the door. The boys were just bringing Donal in from the woods, and the pig grunted noisily when he saw Maureen with his supper. She released the edges of her skirt and the peeling tumbled to the ground.

The four of them stood and watched Donal devour the scraps. Da shook his head. "Alas, Donald, you'll never appear on our own table, for it's yourself that must pay for tools and cloth and all we'll be needing from the village."

The pig looked up at Maureen, waiting for another handful.

"Come along, boys," Da said wearily. "Supper's waiting."

They sat quietly at the long wooden table. Ma took the clay serving bowl down from the hob and set it in the middle of the table. Instead of the usual plain boiled praties, Maureen saw that Ma had mashed them smooth and added nice green bits of wild onion dug from the woods.

"Now if you'll pretend I've added a fine knob of butter and lashings of sweet milk, why we can say we're eating a bowl of champ this night!" Ma said with her modest smile.

"My love forever," Da smiled back, for champ was his favorite dish.

"Mammy, you'll say the beetle rhyme from Granny, the one about the old woman?"

Brian pointed to the wooden potato masher, called a beetle by his mother.

Ma held a finger up to her lips, signaling they must keep their voices low. She picked up the beetle and came around close to the boys. She tapped the beetle lightly against her hand.

"There was an old woman who lived in a lamp,
She had no room to beetle her champ,
She's up with the beetle and broke her lamp,
And then she had room to beetle her champ!"

Everyone was smiling and as Ma spooned the champ into their bowls, Maureen could see that she was pleased. The

servings were small, and soon the bowls were empty.

Maureen felt her stomach complaining. Suddenly she had a question.

“Da, why is it we grow only praties for ourselves? I know the oats and wheat must go to the landlord, but if we grew apples or cherries, then it wouldn’t matter if the praties failed.”

Sean O’Connor looked at the empty bowls and at the faces of his wife and children. Through the window he could see the soft rolling hills of Ireland, now darkly verdant in the twilight.

“If the land was ours again, daughter,” he began and then stopped, struggling for the right word.

How many times Maureen had heard that phrase, “If the land was ours again,” from Da, from Michael Coyle, from Mr. Dunne, from every man who had ever crossed their threshold.

“Once we did grow other things, Maureen,” Ma said. “Cabbages, turnips, marrow, as well as potatoes. We even hoped to own a cow one day. But then the land-rents were raised, not just ours, but everyone’s. More land had to be planted in oats, more time spent working towards the rent. Praties don’t need much tending; sure you’ve seen how a small bed will yield a dozen fine pecks with hardly even a nod from your dad.”

Ma shook her head. “Aye, ‘lazy beds’ we call them, and for years they’ve served us well. But now,” she reached out and patted Maureen’s arm, "now we must be very careful. We’ll use cress and curly dock from the woods, for soups. There’s mallow root, too. We’ll manage, you’ll see.”

Ma looked down the table to where Da was sitting. The fire was getting low, and the night air had a dampness in it.

“I’ve need of more turf soon,” she said quietly.

“Aye, Mary.”

The boys were tired from the day’s journey; there was little objection when time came to make their beds on the smooth earthen floor.

A wind had come up and now rattled against the cottage door. Brian led the saying of the rosary, and then the children, Maureen included, bid their parents good night.

Their straw mats lay close together on the floor, each one with its own woolen blanket. Maureen lay on the outside, closest to the door, with the boys between her and the bed on which Rosheen, Mammy and Da slept. She watched the flickering lights of the fire, and although her eyes were heavy, she did not fall asleep.

Da moved his stool close to Mammy’s chair. “That fire’s a comfort and a blessing, isn’t it?” he said softly. “With an old wind howling at the door?”

Ma was quiet. After a long while, Maureen heard her say: “If it’s true, Sean, if it is a blight that’s spread throughout Ireland, then the only food will be what the grain merchants sell to us?”

Da did not seem to hear. “It’s a peat fire I’m loving,” he said, “more even than coal. The hissing of the turf when it’s burning, like your wee fairies calling to one another.”

Ma’s voice sounded strange. “Sean, will Donegon give us credit to buy a meal when we’ve not praties left?”

Maureen knew about Donegon. Da had dealt with him before. One year they’d run out of praties before the new crop could be dug, and Mr. Donegon had sold Da oats on credit. The cost was so high it had taken Da many months to pay off the debt.

Again, Maureen heard Ma’s question: "Sean, can we get grain when the praties are gone?"

All at once Ma began coughing. When at last she quieted, Da spoke to her gently.

“Aye, woman dear, we can get grain. Even if it’s the pig, the bed, and the kettle we’ll be selling to pay Donegon. He’s a foul greedy gombeen, he is.”

For a long while there was not other sound except the hissing of the fire. Then Da cleared his throat, and Maureen knew what he was going to say.

“It’s my thinking, Mary, that the time may soon come when we must leave Ireland.”

A glowing piece of turf suddenly crumbled, and a shower of sparks went up the chimney.

Ma leaned over, her hand on Da’s arm.

“That day is not yet here!” she said. “You’ll not be talking of leaving our home because a field of potatoes went bad.” Maureen could not hear if Da replied.

The wind was down, and a stillness settled over the cottage. Rosheen's breathing seemed easier now. Maureen quickly closed her eyes as Mammy bent over her and the boys to tuck in their blankets.

Da banked the fire. In the pale moonlight Maureen saw him looking at his children and then heard him murmur: "God be between them and harm." He climbed into the bed and lay next to Ma.

"Good night, Sean. God bless," Ma said.

"Good night my heart. Sleep well."

Still, an uneasy feeling crept into her stomach. Da had looked different today, coming back from the village. It was not so much the lines of worry in his face she had noticed, but the sadness in his eyes. It was as if he had seen something of what was to come, and the sorrow of it had put a great burden on his heart.

Source: Karen Branson. *The Potato Eaters*. New York: Putnam, 1979. Reprinted with permission of Karen Branson.

Nothing To Eat: Under the Hawthorn Tree

BACKGROUND

A number of authors have written for children and adolescents about the Great Irish Famine. The stories generally focus on the experiences of young people and their families. "Nothing to Eat" is Chapter 3 of Marita Conlon-McKenna's prize-winning *Under the Hawthorn Tree*, the first novel of her *Children of the Famine* trilogy that includes *Wildflower Girl* and *Fields of Home.*

Teachers may want to refer to the activity *Hunger in Angela's Ashes* for another view of living in hunger.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Nothing to Eat

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Conlon-McKenna, Marita. *Under the Hawthorn Tree*. Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1990.

Wildflower Girl. Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1991.

Fields of Home. Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1996.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Multiple copies of *Under the Hawthorn Tree*

O'Brien Press (20 Victoria Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6) has published a teacher's guide for *Under the Hawthorn Tree. Under the Hawthorn Tree* by Marita Conlon-McKenna, *The Great Irish Famine: A Study Guide to the Novel and the Film.* edited by Irene Barber, Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1998. Young Irish Filmmakers have made a video of *Under the Hawthorn Tree.* Channel 4 Schools. Box 100, Warwick CV346T2 (www.channel4.com/schools) Four 20-minute videos. (Note: video would have to be converted for American use.)

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the impact of the Great Irish Famine on the O'Driscoll Family.

Describe how a fictionalized version of a family in the Great Irish Famine helps students to better understand the significance of 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 2: Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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.

Present responses to and interpretations of literature.

Read historical narratives (novels) to learn about how historical figures lived, their motivations, hopes, fears, strengths, and weaknesses.

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.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- probe ideas and assumptions
- interpret information
- reflect upon content
- observe and conclude

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to read the handout *Nothing to Eat.* While the child speaking (Eily) does not tell us the year, she tells us the potato crop a year ago was spoiled and that they are still suffering. Her description suggests it is the fall of 1846 when people facing the second year of the Great Irish Famine sold whatever they could to raise money for a ticket to emigrate. What is Mrs. O'Driscoll planning to sell? Mrs. O'Driscoll tells Eily to share around the potato skins. Potato skins were usually fed to the animals, the pig whose sale meant money for the family. What does it mean that the children are eating the animals' food?

Turf or peat is burned for fuel. It is cut from bogs in the size of bricks which are stood on their ends in clusters of three or four sods called *stooks* and wind-dried before being brought home in baskets to be stacked and used for heating and cooking.

2. Why does Mrs. O'Driscoll warn the children to keep the door closed? Their little sister has just died and has been buried under the hawthorn tree, and their mother fears for them. The sickness Mrs. O'Driscoll fears is any one of a number of famine-related diseases that swept the country as the famine went into its second year. More people died of famine-related disease than any other cause. Today, how do we treat contagious diseases like typhus and cholera? In the 19th century there were no public health measures like spraying with insecticides or disinfectants, immunization programs or drugs available to cure the diseases. What do the children do when they hear voices outside their door? What does Michael do to scare off the strangers? Why is it effective?

3. When Mrs. O'Driscoll returns from the village, what does she bring? (Spuds are potatoes and screws of salt are small amounts twisted in a paper.) Before the Great Irish Famine, the O'Driscolls would have lived mainly on the potatoes they grew on their little patch of land. With the loss of their potatoes, the O'Driscolls and their neighbors were no longer self-sufficient and had to pay for their food. Yellow meal was corn meal, famine food. It often caused digestive problems, particularly when it was not finely ground. (See the activity *Famine Food: American Indian Corn.*)

Sprigged cotton was ornamented cotton. Scones are round cakes made on a griddle. Why does Mrs. O'Driscoll tell her hungry children about her childhood and its prosperity? Ask students what kind of a story they would have told their children if they were in the same circumstances?

4. Why has Mrs. O'Brien avoided talking about the village? Mrs. O'Driscoll calls Eily *a ghile* [a GILL-a]. The word literally means brightness or fairness but it has the connotation of beloved. *A stór* [a STORE] means treasure; it is another term of endearment in the Irish language.

What is the news of the village? The children's father is off working on the roads, a reference to the

public works projects created during the Great Irish Famine but which frequently did not pay enough for a worker to feed himself and his family. There was never enough work, so not everyone who needed work could be employed.

A *draper's shop* is a dry goods store, a place that sells cloth, linens and clothing. A *queue* is a line. *A sup of porter* is a sip of a dark, bitter beer.

Mrs. O'Driscoll wonders why the terrible changes have come into the life of her family, her neighbors and her country. What does she ask? How does she account for their hard life? What helps her keep going? Ask students to think of themselves in the O'Driscolls' situation. What is the most important thing they have?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Write what will happen next to the O'Driscoll children. Write an ending to the book before reading the actual ending.

Note: Conlon-McKenna's story continues with Mrs. O'Driscoll leaving the children to search for food and not returning. The children make their way to their aunts Lena and Nano in Castletaggart. Along the way they have other adventures, including avoiding the workhouse and fending off an attack by hungry dogs.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Under the Hawthorn Tree is a text recommended for class use. In field studies, children in a fifth grade class read *Under the Hawthorn Tree.* The book is easily accessible and the students were very engaged with the story. In a fourth grade, the book assisted students in writing a play about the Castlebar Workhouse. (See the activity *Making History Come Alive with Dramatization.*)

Teachers may want to use the activity *Hospitality Rewarded: People Helping Others* with this activity because it illustrates the tradition that hospitality to the poor was rewarded.

Historian Kerby Miller has pointed out the historical inaccuracy in having the children drinking a mug of milk. To do so, the O'Driscolls would need a cow. By the fall of 1846, the family would have sold any stock. This is a good opportunity to talk about the relations between fact and fictionalizing history (historical fiction). Even well-researched historical novels sometimes have historical slips. Encourage students to read critically, yet still enjoy the story.

Nothing to Eat

A few days later, mother called them all together. She had built up the fire. She was dressed and her hair was pinned up with two combs. She had folded up her beautiful handworked lace shawl and grey knitted wedding gown with its matching lace collar and set them on the bed. Her mother had made them for her, for that special June day when she had married John O'Driscoll many years before.

"Eily, share out the potato skins, then sit down." They all had a drink and a bite to eat. Mother took up the brush and began to brush Peggy's long dark hair.

Then she slipped off her shift and put on a cream dress. "Eily, Michael and Peggy, I have to go into the village today, because there's nothing left to eat. Bridget is gone. I have buried one child and I'll not let anything happen to the rest of you. We must have food," she said.

"But, mother," began Eily, "you've no money…oh no, not your dress and shawl, it's all you've left."

"Listen, pet, what good is a dress and a shawl hidden away under the bed? I know they won't bring much, but maybe Patsy Murphy will trade me enough for a bag of meal and some oats or something. With every day we are all getting weaker and losing our strength. We must eat or we'll get sick. Do you think I can't see Peggy and the eyes shining out of her head and her arms and legs like sticks? And Michael, my little man, who can hardly lift the basket of turf and hasn't the strength to walk the few miles to the river to try and catch a bit of fish? And Eily, my darling girl, who is worn out with the worry of it all? Now, listen. You must keep the fire going and get some water in. You are all to stay indoors. Dan Collins told me that the sickness is everywhere and that people are out walking the roads, I will be as fast as I can, but you must keep the door on the latch."

Eily begged. "Please, mother, let me go with you."

Mother shook her head and insisted they stay. She put a few things in her basket and pulled on her shawl. Outside it was a beautiful warm morning. The fields were covered in daisies and the hedgerows were laden with woodbine and honeysuckle. It was tempting to stay outside and play, but they dared not disobey mother. They waved goodbye.

Peggy was cross and cranky and bored. Michael invented games and tried to think of things to distract her, but Eily still had to resort to raising the wooden spoon twice. Peggy lay down on the bed sulking, and angry with Eily.

Suddenly they became aware of footsteps coming down the lane way. Could she be back so soon? Eily was about to rush out and help with the bag of meal when she realized that there were two voices outside. The children stayed still and silent.

"For the love of God, let a poor woman and her son in for a sit down and sup of water," whined the voice. They were standing just outside. "We've walked for miles. We're tired and sore and thirsty. A little help is all we need."

Eily made to go toward the door, but Michael stopped her.

"Remember what mother said," he hissed. "Don't answer."

The strangers were tapping on the door. Quickly Michael moved the turf basket and chair in front of it. The two girls sat on the bed, scared. What if they guessed there were only children in the house?

"Did you hear us?" The woman raised her voice. "We need a bit of help." When there was not reply, the woman began to curse. She picked up two pieces of turf and flung them at the door.

"There could be pickings inside," said the son.

Eily and Michael and Peggy stared at each other, all terrified out of their wits, wondering what would happen when the strangers pushed in the door.

Suddenly Michael got an idea. "Oh, thank God for someone coming along." He moaned. "We need help. Oh, for the love of God, run to the well and bring us a bucket of water. My sister is burning up with the fever and my throat and head feel they are on fire."

Eily put a hand over Peggy's mouth to stop her from giggling or saying something. The two voices outside the door whispered to each other.

"We buried my little sister last week," continued Michael in a high quavering voice "and half the village is dying of the fever. For the love of God…."

The woman raised her voice. She had moved away from the door. “We meant you no harm and God spare ye for we cannot stop. Come on, son, away from this place of sickness.” The two gathered up their bundle of rags and set off down the lane.

Once the children were sure the danger was past they hugged each other.

“Oh, Michael, what a funny brother you are.” joked Eily. “How did you think of it? And yet you saved us all.” Michael blushed pink even to the tips of his ears. “People will pay money to come and see you act. You’ll be a player, and famous too,” added Eily.

With all the excitement, Peggy’s humor improved and she ran around the cottage making up songs about her brave brother.

The sky had begun to darken and the sun was going down when they heard another knock at the door. They all froze and could almost hear the pounding of each other’s hearts.

“It’s me, children, it’s mother.”

Quick as a flash, they opened the door and flung themselves at her, part in welcome and part in relief.

“Wait, wait, you young scamps, don’t knock me over. Let me get my breath back,” begged mother. She had a few small parcels in her arms and she looked exhausted. Her hair hung loose around her face.

“Mother, your combs–our beautiful combs, they’re gone too,” cried Eily.

“Your father always said he preferred my hair long and loose and free with the sun and the breeze through it. Well, now he’ll have his wish,” said mother, trying to smile.

“What did you get? What did you get?” asked Peggy, full of curiosity about what was in the parcels.

Mother put them up on the table and slowly opened each one. In times gone by the children would have paid no heed to mother and her purchases from the village and would have kept on playing in the fields. But now their very lives depended on what was in those packages.

The largest was a bag of oatmeal. Then there was a bag with a few pounds of greyish-looking spuds, then a tub of lard, a few screws of salt, and lastly a small hard piece of dried beef. It wasn’t much.

“There is a large sack of yellow meal too.” Added mother, sensing their desperation.

“Dan Collins said he would bring it over in the morning. He had Moses with him and said it would save me the trouble of lifting it.” Silence hung in the air.

“Mother, it’s grand, really grand,” assured Eily, kissing her mother and putting her arms around her neck. She put water on to boil–God knows, Mother deserved a cup of tea.

“Put on a spud each to bake and we’ll all have a bit of dry beef too,” said mother, trying to cheer them up. She suddenly reached deep into the pocket of her apron and produced four rather battered-looking candles. She lit one and placed it on the table and put the others away on the dresser.

The turf fire burned warmly in the grate and the cottage glowed in the soft golden light of the candle. This was home, safe and sound. Spuds baking, it was almost like old times. Peggy sat on mother’s lap, her thin face pressed to mother’s breast.

“Tell us a story, mother, about when you were little before…” Peggy stopped, “please, mother.”

Mother kissed her hair and told Michael and Eily to sit in near the fire. She was tired, but it was nice to remember.

“Did I ever tell you about the time of my eighth birthday? Such a time, it was just lovely. My mother, your grandmother, had worked at making me the loveliest dress ever–it was sprigged cotton and had the pattern of pale pink rosebuds against grey on it. It buttoned up the back and had a high collar with a lace ruffle and a lace petticoat to match. The day before, we called to my aunts Nano and Lena in their shop to invite them for tea. I can still see them standing in their white starched aprons, and fruit and pies and tarts spread out on the counter, and the shelf stacked with jams and preserves. Lord and ladies and gentlefolk and big farmers came from far afield to buy their confections and it was said that on market days you would hardly fit into the shop it was that busy. The aunts got very flushed when we walked in, and mother winked at them.”

“On my birthday morning mother and father gave me a big package—I can still see it. I tore off the paper and inside there was a doll, a beautiful wooden doll with a proper face and hair, and, would you believe it, she has the same

dress as mine and even the same pink ribbon in her hair. Oh, the wonder of it? and then, later a special tea. My Aunt Kitty and my four cousins came to tea. There were scones and fresh baked bread and plum jam, and then Nano and Lena came and they had a tin with a special cake in it. It was covered in sugar icing and had tiny sweet violets laid on the top. I don't think I've ever seen anything as nice. We all clapped. Aunt Nano had baked the cake and Aunt Lena had decorated it. They were a great pair. Afterwards father took out the fiddle and we all danced. My three brothers were as nice as pie and didn't fight or shout all evening, and my Aunt Kitty gave us all a dancing lesson."

Mother stopped. Three soft little faces were turned to her. She swallowed a lump in her throat. Would her little ones ever know such times? Their lives were so hard.

"Come on, children, stir yourselves, the meal is ready."

They savored each mouthful, not caring that the potato was so hot it nearly burned their tongues. They cracked the crisp skin. They chewed the dry salted beef, washing it all down with a large mug of milk each. What a feast. They needed no cake after such a feast.

Eily and Michael cleared up and mother helped Peggy undress for the night. The fire burned low and the candle cast flickering shadows on the wall. How mother laughed when she heard about Michael, and praised them all on their level headedness in the face of trouble. Peggy had dozed off. Mother carried her to the bed and tucked her in before settling down again.

"Mother, what about the village?" inquired Eily, wondering why mother had avoided mentioning it all evening.

"Oh, a ghile, what times have fallen on us all. Half the place is dying with the fever and the others have left their houses and taken to the roads, looking for work and food or just to escape the place. The whole O'Brien family is gone."

"You mean gone on the road, mother?" interrupted Eily.

"No a stór, into the ground every single one of them, all those five sons and Mary O'Brien, the kindest woman that every lived. The Connors and Kinsella have both left, Nell Kinsella had enough put by, and they plan to buy tickets and sail to America. No one knows where the Connors are. Francis O'Hagan has closed up her draper's shop. She said what call would folk have for material and lace and clothing when they have hardly enough to put a bit of food in their children's mouths."

"Patsy Murphy, in the general store, was packed out—his store room was full of clothes and furniture and knick-knacks. You had to wait in a queue for your turn. There were two women with nothing to trade and not a penny either. Patsy is a good man, he gave them a few scoops of yellow meal each. I had to bargain with him. He could see the fineness of the lace work and could tell mother was a craftswoman—I put the combs in to seal the deal. All through the village there is hardly a sinner—not a child to be seen outdoors. The strange thing is there seems to be no animals either, the only ones I saw were Patsy's horse and cart and Dan's old Moses. Even the dogs have disappeared."

"Poor Father Doyle is very bad and hasn't stirred at all in weeks—his housekeeper Annie died a few days back. The few men that are left were sitting by the fire in Mercy Farrell's, and not even one was having a sup of porter. I met Corney Egan—that poor man is nothing but a bag of bones. They wouldn't take him for the roadworks, so there is nothing for him now. He told me that the roadworks were about twenty miles from the village and that a lot of the men around about are working there. He thinks that John is one of them. Imagine, your father may be so near, and working. I should go to him and see if he is all right. He doesn't know about Bridget or how bad things have got.

"There is so much talk. Lord Edward Lyons and all his family have left and gone back to England and closed up the big house—only old Mags and her husband have been left to caretake the place. Jer Simmonds has total control over the farm and land and can do what he likes about the lot of us. Tom Daly is his right-hand man. All of the rest of the staff have been let go. Dan told me his daughter Teresa and son Donal have arrived back home as they've nowhere else to go. The world has gone crazy. To think—in a beautiful country like this, people are starving, children hungry. Men and women like ghosts walking the road and all afraid of catching the fever. Has the good Lord forgotten us?"

Eily felt a chill run down her back. She had never heard her gentle mother talk so much or seem so upset and angry. Eily did not know what to say.

"Then, father is alive, he might come back to us with money and food and all kinds of things," blurted out Michael.

"Michael, lovey, the roadworks are far, far away. The men are weak and the work is hard. Your father is a strong hardy man, but breaking stones is the very devil. He'll do his best for us all, that I can promise you. You miss him, we'll miss him—say a prayer for him when you go to sleep tonight."

With that mother got up and went outside. Eily followed her. The sky was black and hundreds of stars twinkled up above.

"Sometimes I wonder does God even know what is happening down here—his world is so vast and big," whispered Eily.

"I know, pet, I wonder too. God acts in such strange ways and there is no sense to why life is so hard. We just have to make the best of what we have and each other and keep going," she said. She wrapped the shawl tightly around Eily, protecting her from the damp air. Eily had never felt so close to mother.

Source: Marita Conlon-McKenna. "Nothing to Eat:" *Under the Hawthorn Tree*. Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1990.
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Irish Quakers

BACKGROUND

The Quakers are especially remembered in Ireland for the work they did to relieve suffering during the Great Irish Famine. During the 1997 commemoration of the Great Irish Famine, the Irish government issued a stamp in honor of the Quaker contribution to famine relief.

While groups like the British Relief Association handled more money (390,000 pounds) than the Quakers (200,000, pounds), the Quaker response was immediate and effective (Goodbody 82). In the autumn of 1846, when it became clear that the government response to the famine was inadequate, the Irish Society of Friends met in Dublin Nov. 1, 1846, to found the Central Relief Committee (CRC) of the Society of Friends. They set up soup shops where a quart of nourishing soup was available for a penny. Soup tickets could be purchased and distributed to the poor. There was little of the demeaning bureaucracy that characterized the government relief programs.

One of the strengths of the Quakers was their ability to organize a practical relief system. (Most of the prominent members of the Central Relief Committee were successful Quaker businessmen.) The Irish Quakers compensated for their relatively small numbers with their energy, compassion, skills at organizing, and their even-handed distribution of aid.

Teachers may also want to refer to the activities *Irish Friends and Frederick Douglass' Freedom* and the series of activities on soup kitchens.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Goodbody, Robin. *Quaker Relief Work in Ireland's Great Hunger.* Kendal, Cumbria: Quaker Tapestry Booklets, 1995.

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

Hatton, Helen. *The Largest Amount of Good: Quaker Relief in Ireland,* 1654-1921. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993.

Kissane, Noel. "The Society of Friends," *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History.* Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995. pp. 126-127.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the role of the Irish Society of Friends (Quakers) during the Great Irish Famine.

Explain the complexities of organizing and administering relief programs.

Design a model soup kitchen.

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

Understand the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, scientific, technological, and religious practices and activities.

Identify and collect economic information from standard reference works, newspapers, periodicals, computer databases, textbooks, and other primary and secondary sources.

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 data bases intended for a general audience.

Write and present research reports, feature articles, and thesis/support papers on a variety of topics related to all school subjects.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- inquire, question, probe
- ask and answer logical questions
- present information
- work with others to solve problems
- communicate results of research and projects
- set up hypotheses and alternative courses of action
- acquire and organize information
- synthesize information
- make decisions about process
- utilize multiple resources in research

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. What do students know about the Religious Society of Friends, better known as the Quakers? Do students know any Quakers? Is there a Quaker meeting house in the area? Students may know that there are Friends elementary, secondary schools and colleges, including Earlham and Swarthmore. They may know that Friends are pacifists and that they worked to abolish slavery and to improve conditions for workers. Today, they also serve around the world providing a variety of services and support to people in developing countries and help in communities to resolve conflict.
2. When she was working among the poor during the famine, Asenath Nicholson heard them praise the Quakers. When she asked who fed and clothed them, they responded, “The good Quakers, lady, and it’s they that have the religion entirely.” What did Nicholson’s informants mean when they said, “They have the religion entirely?”
3. The Central Relief Committee (CRC) also supplied relief for the poor in the far south and west of Ireland. Working as the Central Relief Committee, how would class members assess the needs of destitute communities in remote parts of Ireland? Who could supply needed information? How would the CRC contact those people? If the CRC wanted to replicate their soup shop model in rural Ireland, who would

help them in a local area? Can the CRC identify local leaders who would administer the soup kitchens? Who would they be? How would they be supplied with ingredients for soup? What equipment would be needed to make large quantities of soup? How and when would the soup be prepared and dispensed? What kind of accountability would local workers have to the CRC? How would the CRC oversee the soup kitchen?

4. Working in groups, students should decide how they would organize a soup kitchen for your community. Who will do the work? What kind of food will be distributed? Where will it be distributed? When will it be distributed? How will it be distributed? Who will be eligible to receive the food? What barriers would have to be overcome?
5. During the Great Irish Famine, care-givers were at risk of contracting famine-related infectious diseases like typhus and cholera, and Quakers and other relief workers lost their lives working among the sick. Famine relief workers knew the chance they were taking. Ask students if they would help others if it meant putting themselves at risk.

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

Describe the steps that were taken to create their soup kitchen model, emphasizing the process, not the product. Comment on the successful and unsuccessful aspects of the process.

TEACHER REFLECTION

The Irish Quakers under the name Irish Quaker Faith in Action continue to supply personnel, money and supplies to communities in Africa, in Asia and in the Middle East. Teachers may want to encourage students to find out about some of their current projects or some of the Friends World Services Projects.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

Some Quaker services, or *meetings* are designed so that participants can reflect and meditate silently. When someone feels like sharing a thought or raising a question, then they speak. The others, if they so desire, can respond. Sometimes there is silence for several minutes or longer. Some meetings could be an hour of silence followed by “afterthoughts.” Ask students to discuss:

How they would feel if they were encouraged to sit silently for more than fifteen minutes. What would they contemplate?

How does this type of meeting compare to their own religious services?

Soup Kitchens Then and Now

BACKGROUND

In the fall of 1846, when the British government's response to the Great Irish Famine proved inadequate, the Irish Quakers (Society of Friends) organized the Central Relief Committee to sell nutritious soup and small half-loaves of bread. The soup cost one penny a quart; a penny and a half bought soup and bread. Friends of the poor bought soup tickets and distributed them to those who needed the soup tickets. Later, most of their soup was given free.

The primary purpose of this activity is for students to understand how not-for-profit and volunteer organizations have responded to social problems throughout history.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

'The Cork Society of Friends' Soup House

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Donnelly, James S. Jr. *The Irish Potato Famine.* New York: Sutton, 2001.

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

Kissane, Noel. "Soup Kitchens," *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History.* Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995, pp. 75-87.

Litton, Helen. *The Irish Famine: An Illustrated History.* Minneapolis: Irish Books and Media, 1994.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Describe the need for soup kitchens in Irish history and in the United States today.

Explain the complexities of organizing and running a soup kitchen or similar site.

Describe the role of the Quaker Friends in creating soup kitchens during the Irish Famine.

Explain the role of volunteer and not-for-profit organizations in responding to social problems such as famine.

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 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.

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

Investigate the roles and contributions of individuals and groups in relation to key social, political, cultural and religious practices throughout 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 by analyzing their literature, diary accounts, letters, artifacts, art, music, architectural drawings, and other documents.

Know some ways individuals and groups attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce resources.

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.

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

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- observe and conclude
- reflective thinking
- inquire, question, probe
- think rationally about content
- ask and answer logical questions
- gather information
- interpret information and data
- reflect upon content/form opinions

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

English Language Arts

MULTIPLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Visit a soup kitchen or food bank

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. One of the first soup shops to open was the Cork Society of Friends Soup House. Look at the engraving of the soup house (see handout). The vats were heated by steam which was piped in through the window from another building. The Quakers were especially concerned with cleanliness. What are they doing to keep their kitchen clean?

What would be some of the difficulties of running a soup kitchen?

Describe what you envision when this soup kitchen is filled with hungry Irish families.

2. Ask a guest speaker to present information on the local "soup kitchen," food bank, or homeless shelter that provides meals. (Students may conduct phone interviews and share their findings.) Emphasis should be on the purpose and activities of the organization. (Keep in mind that there may be students in the class who have benefitted from a shelter or food bank, and may be uncomfortable sharing their observations.)

Discuss these and other possible questions in advance of the speaker.

How is your local soup kitchen organized? Compare the Quaker soup kitchen with your soup kitchen. What food is served? Are the meals free or do guests pay a small fee? Do guests ever get food to take home? What kind of food? Who comes to the soup kitchen?

Where is the food prepared? How is the food preparation organized? What kind of equipment heats the food? What about cleanliness? What steps do the organizers take to keep the kitchen and serving areas clean? Are there special instructions for food handlers?

Who supports the soup kitchen? People support soup kitchens by donating money, donating food or by donating time. What can students donate to your soup kitchen?

3. Ask students to describe in either words or drawings the Irish soup kitchen or a local "soup kitchen," including at least five details gleaned from class discussions.

TEACHER REFLECTION

This is one of a series of three activities that were originally designed for a 9th grade Special Education Social Studies class who were doing a community service project at their local soup kitchen. The activities *Soyer Soup* and *Soup Kitchen Journals* complete the series. All three activities are appropriate for middle to high school students.

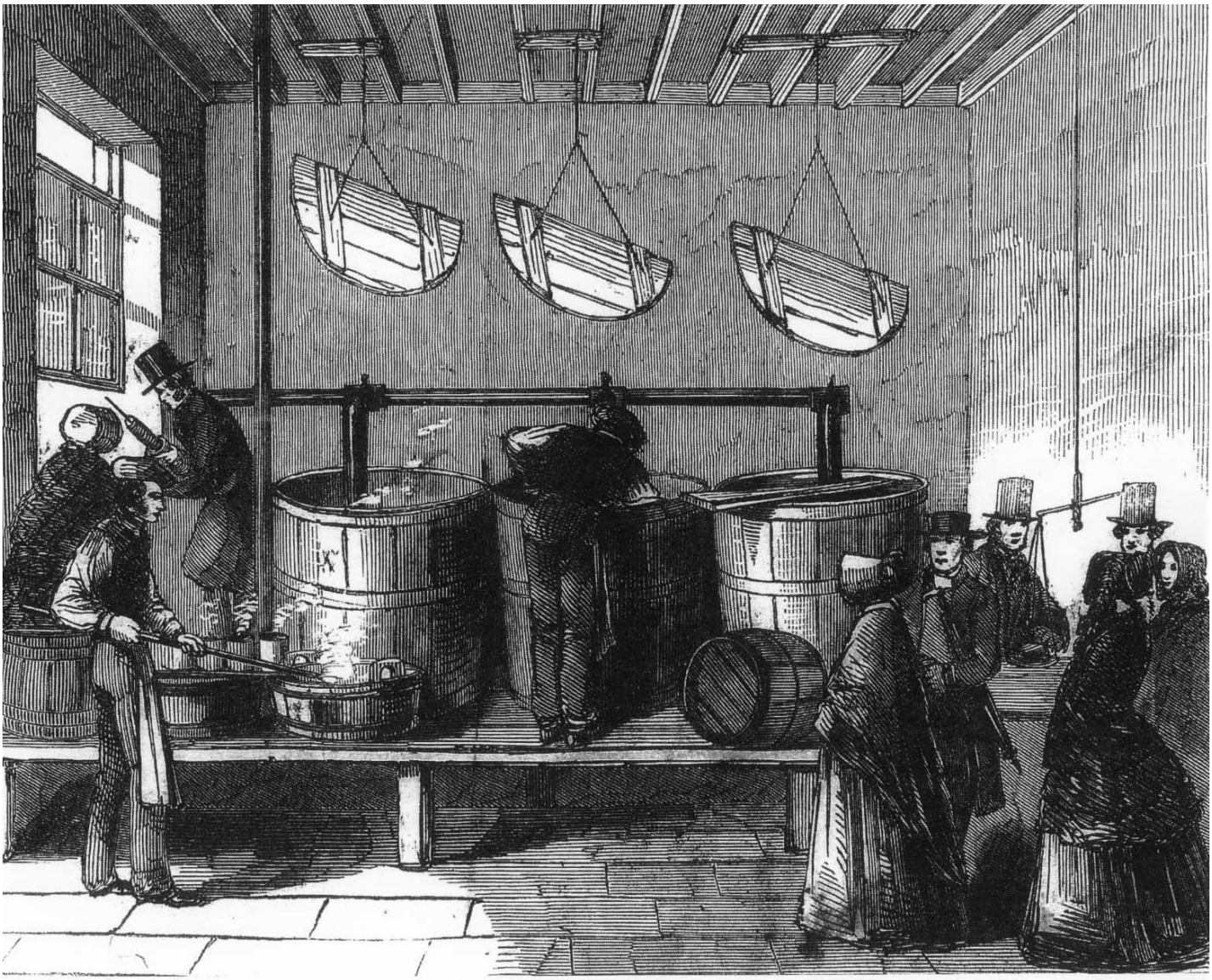
ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

For the younger student:

Identify foods that would be nutritious and inexpensive for soup kitchens to provide.

For the advanced student:

Research the religious tenets of the Quakers that would explain their involvement in soup kitchens in Ireland.



The Cork Society of Friends Soup House

(*The Illustrated London News*, 16 jan. 1847.)

Source: Noel Kissane. **The Irish Famine, A Documentary History**.
Dublin: national Library of Ireland, 1995. p. 81.
Used with permission of the author and the National Library of Ireland.

Soyer Soup

BACKGROUND

In the spring of 1847, after the Quakers had established their soup kitchens, the government passed the Destitute Poor Act, which was known as the Soup Kitchen Act. The government hired Alexis Benoit Soyer, the French chef at the Reform Club in London, to set up a model soup kitchen in Dublin. Soyer Soup became a joke in Dublin and raised serious questions about the treatment of the poor.

For additional information, see the activities *Soup Kitchens Then and Now* and *Soup Kitchen Journals*.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Mr. Soyer's Model Soup Kitchen

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Anonymous, "A Vision of Connaught in the Thirteenth Century," *The Hungry Voice. The Poetry of the Irish Famine.* Christopher Morash, ed. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1989.

Hatton, Helen. *The Largest Amount of Good. Quaker Relief in Ireland.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1993, pp. 139.

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

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

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Soup recipes posted (see Learning Experience #1.)

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the role of Soyer Soup in the Destitute Poor Act (Soup Kitchen Act).

Analyze the attitudes of society towards the poor.

Evaluate the message of a poem about Soyer Soup and draw conclusions.

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

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.

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

Know some ways individuals and groups attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce resources.

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.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- evaluate and connect evidence
- observe and conclude
- reflective thinking
- take and defend positions
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- identify premises and rationale for points of view
- present information
- participate in interpersonal and group activities
- communicate results of research projects

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Mathematics

Family and Consumer Sciences

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to look at the two recipes for soup. What differences between the soups do they notice:

Soyer Soup	Quaker Soup
100 gallons water	100 gallons water
12 1/2 pounds beef	75 pounds beef
6 1/2 pounds drippings	35 pounds dried peas
100 onions	21 pounds barley
25 pounds barley	21 pounds oatmeal
25 pounds flour (seconds)	1 1/2 pounds pepper
1 1/2 pounds brown sugar	14 pounds salt
9 pounds salt	

Reduce the numbers in the recipes and make a sample batch of each soup. Keep track of expenses. Which batch was more expensive to make? What do students predict will be the results?

Invite another class in for a taste test. What does your test sample say about flavor, taste (sweet, salty, spicy), texture. Which batch do they prefer?

2. Soyer Soup became a joke in Dublin, and people wrote ballads about it, including one that describes how the steam was so strong that a poor Irishman fell into the soup vat and was boiled, shoes and all.

An anonymous poet wrote a parody of James Clarence Mangan's "A Vision of Connaught in the Thirteenth Century" called "A Vision of Connaught in the Nineteenth Century." The poem alludes to Soyer Soup:

Then I saw drones
And all the elite
And a kitchen rose near me as by a spell
But neither of bones
Nor of juicy meat
Could I ever the faintest perfume smell.
A greasy slime
The water appears
As Soyer, the great enchanter, knows
(Morash 130-131. Reprinted with permission of Irish Academic Press.)

Why does Mangan call Soyer an *enchanter*? Is Soyer trying to create something from nothing? The drones were the Dublin poor who came to the soup kitchen for Soyer Soup, and the elite were members of Dublin society who paid to come along to see the paupers fed. What does a society think about its poor when they pay to see them fed?

3. American famine relief worker Asenath Nicholson also wrote about Soyer Soup in a critical but comic way that is called a satire. Discuss the content, including the use of the term *Paddy*. She said:

> *Every minutia cannot be given, either of the getting up or the recipe itself, but the sum and substance was simply this—that a French cook from London was sent to Dublin with a recipe of his own concocting, made out of drippings, whether of shinbones or ox-tails was not specified but this dripping was to be so savoury, and withal so nourishing, that with a trifling sum Paddy could be fed, and fed too so that he could dig drains, cut turf and spade gardens* (*Nicholson 143*).

ASSESSMENT OPTION

In another part of her account of the famine in Ireland, Nicholson talks about the old, moldy flour that the government issued to make bread for school children. Some years ago here in America, catsup was designated a vegetable in our federally funded school lunch program. Write an essay answering the question whether you think "just anything" is good enough for the poor since it is provided for free and supported financially by the public. Include Soyer Soup and other examples in your response.

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity is part of the larger question of whether the Great Irish Famine was an act of nature or was caused by people and governments, a question that asks students to think about how a society should treat its poor people.

This activity can be taught with the activity titled *Famine Food: American Indian Corn* which looks at the relief food that the Irish often found indigestible.

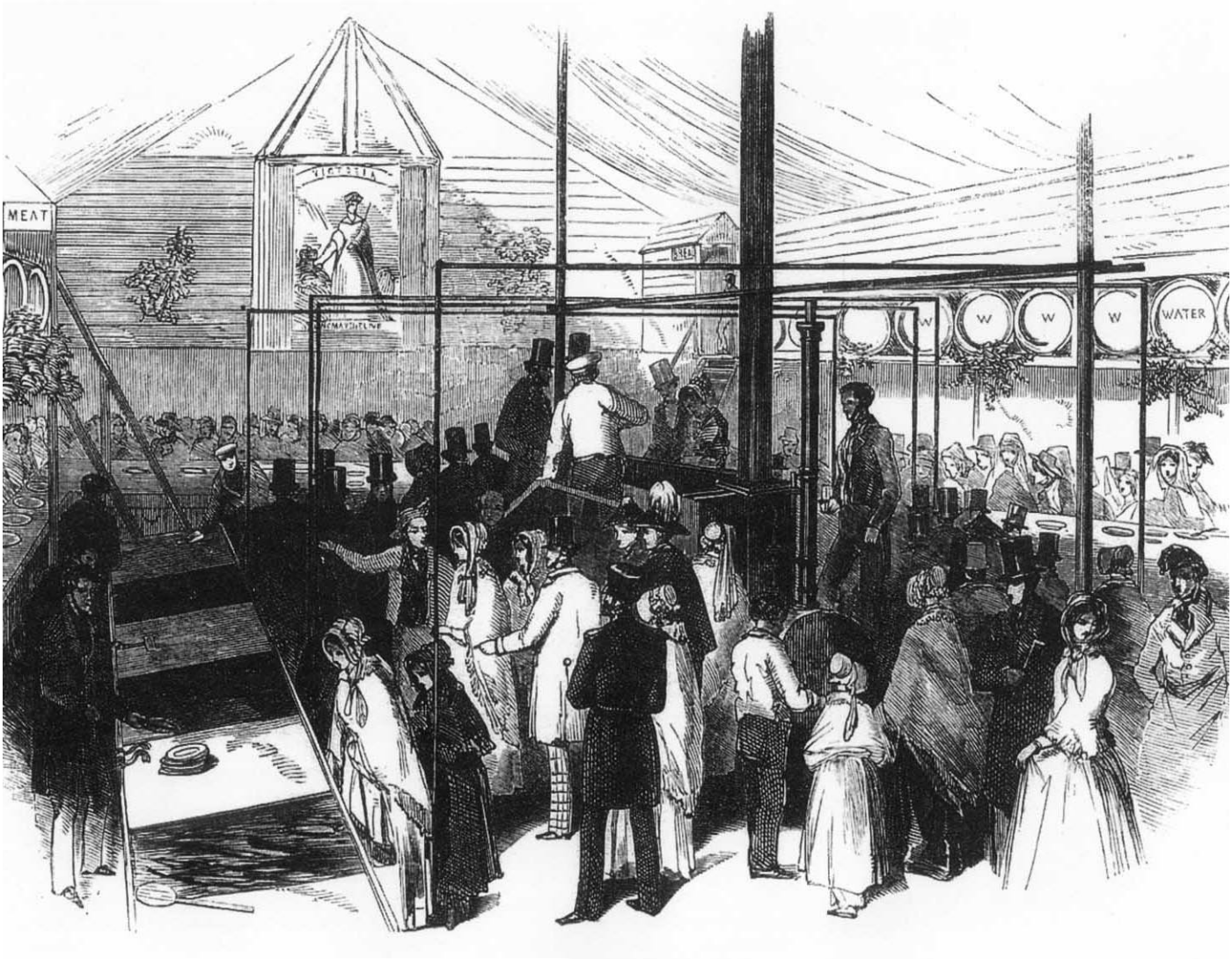
ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

For the younger student:

Discuss the meaning of the word *poor* and the various causes of poverty, recognizing multiple perspectives by adults on the subject.

For the advanced student:

Investigate state regulations and legislative bills that address issues related to poverty in New York State. Write reactions to the documents.



The French chef at London's Reform Club, Alexis Soyer, was invited to Dublin by the Lord Lieutenant to install a model soup kitchen. The kitchen provided 8,750 rations a day; the government handed it over to the relief committee of the South Dublin Union. A decade later Soyer gained international fame for reforming the diet and victualling of the British army in the Crimea. (*The Illustrated London News*, 17 April 1847.)

Source: Noel Kissane. **The Irish Famine, A Documentary History**.
Dublin: national Library of Ireland, 1995. p. 81.

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

Soup Kitchen Journals

BACKGROUND

This activity centers on the students visiting or reading about a soup kitchen or related facility.

(For additional background, see the activities *Soyer Soup* and *Soup Kitchens Then and Now*.)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Alfred Webb and the Irish Famine

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Harrison, Richard. *Richard Davis Webb: Dublin Quaker Printer (1805-1872)*. Skibbereen: Red Barn, 1993.

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

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Arrange for visits and volunteer opportunities

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the role of the soup kitchen during the Great Irish Famine.

Conceptualize the image of soup kitchens and describe in detail the setting and atmosphere of a soup kitchen.

Describe and appreciate first-hand the services of a soup kitchen (or similar facility) by observing the setting and atmosphere.

Create and discuss Journal entries.

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

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Know the social and economic characteristics, such as customs, traditions, 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.

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

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.

Know some ways individuals and groups attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce resources.

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.

Gather and interpret information from children's reference books, magazines, textbooks, electronic bulletin boards, audio and media presentations, oral interviews, and from such sources as charts, graphs, maps, and diagrams.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- observe and conclude
- reflective thinking
- draw conclusions
- view information from a variety or perspectives
- ask and answer logical questions
- participate in interpersonal and group activities
- work with others to solve problems
- communicate results of research and projects
- conceptualize and observe

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Discuss the handout, *Alfred Webb and the Irish Famine*, describing the role of the Quakers in establishing soup kitchens during the Great Irish Famine. Ask students to identify details in the description that helped them to picture the atmosphere.

What words make the details vivid?

How are feelings conveyed?

What background was provided?

What did students learn about the Quakers, and Alfred Webb and his parents?

2. Arrange for students to visit, read about or hear a speaker discuss a local soup kitchen or similar setting.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Ask students to write three journal entries describing their experiences (real or imaginary) working in their local soup kitchen. Encourage them to make their reader experience what it is like to be a worker in a soup kitchen. What details will they use to help their readers see, smell, hear, taste, and feel the atmosphere?

TEACHER REFLECTION

This is the third in the series of activities (along with *Soup Kitchens Then and Now* and *Soyer Soup*) that were originally designed for a 9th grade Special Education Social Studies class where students were doing a community service project in the local soup kitchen. The goal of this activity is to offer some prompts to students to write their own soup kitchen experiences using specific details that appeal to the reader's senses. These activities are appropriate for all middle to high school students.

This is an opportunity to talk with students about the work that contemporary Quakers (and others) do through the Friends Worlds Services projects and other community service and not-for-profit organizations. Small donations make it possible for disadvantaged people to be self-sufficient.

(Note: Teachers should always be sensitive to the fact that some students have been recipients of the services of soup kitchens and other service organizations, and may be uncomfortable sharing their experiences. Keep the discussion on an intellectual rather than a personal level.)

Alfred Webb and the Irish Famine

Alfred Webb was born to a Dublin Quaker family in 1834. His father was the printer Richard Davis Webb; his mother, Hannah Waring Webb, was from County Waterford. They lived in the center of Dublin, around the corner from Trinity College, at 176 Great Brunswick Street. Richard Davis Webb had many American friends who were abolitionists and he shared in their work to end slavery in America. Americans like James and Lucretia Mott, founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society, and William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the *Liberator*, stayed with the Webbs when they visited Dublin. Webb was one of the Quakers who put up the money to purchase Frederick Douglass' freedom.

Alfred Webb was 11 years old when the famine began in September 1845. The potato crop failed again in 1846, and people were starving. Another Quaker named Joseph Bewley called a meeting to talk about what could be done to provide relief to the hungry. From their experience with abolitionism, the Dublin Quakers knew about how to organize a campaign. This time it was a campaign to provide food for those who were hungry. They formed a committee called the Central Relief Committee. Alfred's father's company, Webb and Chapman, gave the first contribution to the CRC.

The CRC decided the best thing to do was to open a soup kitchen in the center of Dublin. They found a place near the River Liffey, and they set up big vats to serve a nutritious soup which they sold for a penny for one quart. Most of the poor really didn't have to pay for the soup. People bought soup tickets and gave them to the poor, or they left tickets with volunteers at the soup kitchen to give to them.

The soup kitchen was open at seven in the morning and at mid-day. The room was warm with the heat from the vats, heat piped in from a steam engine next door. There was a smell of fresh bread and a sweet smell of simmering soup. Quaker ladies in white caps and aprons and with white sleeves pulled on over their dresses kept the food clean and worked quietly distributing soup to the line of thin, sad and ragged people who waited silently.

Richard Davis Webb's friend, Asenath Nicholson, an American who had come to work among the poor, stayed with them during the spring of 1847. She had her own soup kitchen across the river, and she used to go into the houses of the poor to cook for them. Sometimes she brought Alfred and his brother along to help her carry her baskets. She always said she could not help everyone, but that she could help some people. Mrs. Nicholson closed her soup kitchen in the summer of 1847. That was the same time that the CRC soup kitchen slowed down too, and the Quakers decided it was time to devote their effort to developing employment opportunities like fishing and improving agriculture by introducing new crops. Their soup kitchens kept the hungry alive in the spring of 1847 until the government soup kitchens were operating and providing food for the poor.

Source: Maureen Murphy. *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum* Committee.

Famine Food: American Indian Corn

BACKGROUND

American Indian meal (corn meal) was the chief food the government relied on for famine relief. As early as 1800, imported Indian meal was distributed to the poor when potato supplies were low. Much of the food arrived as unground corn, and the Irish often lacked the resources to grind the hard kernels finely enough and to boil the meal long enough to make it digestible. Insufficiently ground and cooked Indian meal caused acute distress and in some cases death to the starving Irish. With the passing of the Destitute Poor Act (Soup Kitchen Act) in 1847, the government set up facilities to actually cook the food for the poor. The earlier Quaker relief plan had used the soup kitchen model successfully. (See activities *Soup Kitchens Then and Now*, *Soyer Soup*, and *Soup Kitchen Journals.*)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Hungry—But Not *That* Hungry

Recipes for Corn Meal Mush and Cornbread

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Crawford, E. Margaret. "Food and Famine," in Cathal Poirteir, ed., *The Great Irish Famine*. Dublin: Mercier Press, 1995.

Nicholson, Asenath. *Nature's Own Book*. Glasgow: Brown, 1846.

Póirtéir, Cathal. "Boilers, Stirabout and Yellow Male," *Famine Echoes.* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1995.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

unground corn
hand food grinders
corn meal
recipe ingredients
cooking utensils
baking facility (for corn bread)

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Understand the role of American Indian corn used to feed victims of the Irish famine.

Analyze whether the provision of corn was an appropriate solution to Irish hunger.

Create a corn-based dish.

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.

HPEFCS 1: Students will have the necessary knowledge and skills to establish and maintain physical fitness, participate in physical activity, and maintain personal health.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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

Understand the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, scientific, technological, and religious practices and activities.

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.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- analytical thinking
- evaluate and connect evidence
- observe and conclude
- draw conclusions
- take and defend positions
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- ask and answer logical questions
- participate in interpersonal and group activities
- make decisions about process

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Mathematics

Family and Consumer Sciences

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. In this activity students will be preparing corn meal mush and corn bread, after discussing the use of American Indian corn as a solution to the mass starvation in Ireland in the 1800s. Discuss:

Why was corn suggested as a solution to famine? Was it a good suggestion?

Why would it be important to cook corn properly?

What does the improper preparation of corn say about attitudes toward feeding the poor?

What is the nutritional value of corn?

Ask students to grind two cups of unground corn. What do they notice about the process? Is the corn hard to grind? What is the texture of the partially ground kernels? Do they appear to be easily digested?

2. One of the famine relief workers, the American Asenath Nicholson, was familiar with how to cook Indian meal, a food she felt was especially nourishing if cooked properly. "There is no gruel that the taste and stomach will so long relish as that made of the American Indian meal and water; the meal stirred in at an early stage. It should be boiled at least half an hour, and an hour is still better." Discuss the importance of serving a healthy, digestible meal that needed to last a long time.

3. Create the corn meal mush and the corn bread.

4. Ask students to read the handout, "Hungry, but Not *That* Hungry" that describes the response of Albanian refugees to the relief rations supplied by the United States government. What reasons did officials give for supplying those particular rations? Why did the Albanians say the food was inappropriate? Where else is American relief food considered inappropriate? Why?

Discuss whether a diet of corn mush would be satisfying (physiologically, emotionally, socially, culturally, etc.) to an Irish family suffering during the famine.

5. Ask students to imagine waiting a day or two for another meal of corn mush. Ask:

   Should more food be provided?

   Who will pay for it and how will they raise the money?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Why do you think the poor in Ireland were just given one food to eat, sometimes ill-prepared?

Why is it so difficult for governments (and other nations) to help to feed the world's poor? What are some of the barriers to feeding the hungry?

TEACHER REFLECTION

Baking corn bread will be more popular than making corn meal mush! This activity reminds students that the Irish experience with Indian meal during the Great Irish Famine was not a singular event. Other well-intentioned food programs have proven to be unsuccessful with the people they are meant to aid. The activity invites discussion on all kinds of food programs, including the standards of school lunches.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For younger students:

Students can identify healthy, easy foods derived from corn.

Students can consult with food pantries to discover the most popular, healthy, easy, and/or cost-effective foods.

For advanced students:

Ask students to put themselves in the position of a hunger relief official who has to make decisions about what kind of relief food is appropriate to send a particular group of people who are faced with famine. Using the information they have learned about Indian corn in Ireland and about current relief to Albania and Somalia, what *criteria* would they develop for choosing the kind of food they would send?

Students can research the status of hunger around the world in the new millennium.

Hungry, But Not *That* Hungry

This article is about events that took place in Kukes, Albania, in 1999. Similar problems occurred in Ireland during the Great Irish Famine when people were given packages of unground or insufficiently ground hard corn. As you read the article, consider who is responsible for what is taking place.

Kosovo refugees are throwing away U.S.-donated rations by the thousands and have even burned some to keep warm, complaining that the food is inedible and has made people sick. Piles of unopened packages, each labeled "A Food Gift from the People of the United States of America," littered the grounds of makeshift camps housing many of the 150,000 ethnic Albanians who have poured across the border in recent weeks. A Defense Department spokesman had trumpeted the 2,200-calorie meals as enough food to feed one refugee for one day and "suitable for all faiths." "We know the Americans want to help, but the food is just no good," said Arolelina Ajazi, 18.

Desperate refugees fought for the packages, officially known as Humanitarian Daily Rations, when they were first distributed off the backs of trucks several days ago. But some later said the meals—which include items such as three-bean casserole, legume stew, and vegetarian goulash, which were foreign to their normal diet—made their children vomit. The refugees are used to a diet based on potatoes, rice, and beans. "We don't eat because the children get a fever and throw up and are going to be poisoned." said Selvie Gashi, 27.

Many of the packages were discarded in fetid trenches and streams filled with garbage and excrement. But several families were seen huddling around campfires using boxes of rations to help fuel the flames. Medical experts said similar problems were reported during a humanitarian mission in Somalia, where food distributed by U.S. military troops was too rich for the local population.

Source: Summary of "Hungry, But Not *That* Hungry." © 1999 *Newsday, Inc*. Reprinted with permission.

Recipes

Corn Meal Mush

Combine and stir:

1 cup corn meal
1 cup of cold water
1 teaspoon of salt

- Put 4 cups of boiling water in the top of a double boiler. Stir in corn meal gradually. Add salt.
- Cook and stir mush 2-3 minutes over a quick flame.
- Cover and steam over boiling water for 30 minutes, stirring frequently. If eaten as mush it should be cooked a little longer.

Corn Bread

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Heat a well-greased pan. Beat one egg slightly and mix in two cups of thick buttermilk. Mix two cups of plain white or yellow cornmeal with one teaspoon of salt and one teaspoon of soda. Add to milk mixture, stirring only enough to blend the mixture. Spoon into heated pan and bake 30 minutes.

Source: Maureen Murphy. *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum* Committee.

Making History Come Alive Through Dramatization

BACKGROUND

During the Great Irish Famine, there were hundreds of children orphaned and left homeless. In better times, other family and neighbors would have provided for them, but in famine times, with such widespread poverty and disease, children had to look after themselves. The government had no provision to help the poor except for the district workhouses, grim stone buildings where the residents were treated like prisoners. Their only crime was that they were poor. Families were separated when they entered the workhouses and there was no contact between husbands and wives, and almost no contact between parents and children. There was some schooling for children. There was little work for adults.

As awful as the conditions were in the workhouses during the Great Irish Famine, people still begged to be admitted to them because they had nowhere else to go. People often had to wait for long periods outside the workhouse until they were admitted. Workhouses built for 800 were crowded with over 1000 people. Overcrowding led to disease and death, especially among children and the elderly. The workhouse as a place of suffering and death left a special dread and horror among the Irish for generations after the famine.

(**Note:** This activity can be used in conjunction with *The Irish Workhouse System* and *Afraid of the Workhouse.*)

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Mrs. Arthur

ADDITIONAL READINGS

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

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Props and materials for creating backdrops and costumes (optional)

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the meaning of Mrs. Arthur's story.

Write and perform improvisational pieces and plays based on the first-hand account of the Great Irish Famine, the story of the Castlebar workhouse.

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. **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)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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

View history through the eyes of those who witnessed key events and developments by analyzing their literature, diary accounts and letters.

Write stories, poems, literary essays, and plays that observe the conventions of the genre and contain interesting and effective language and voice.

Use improvisation and guided play writing to communicate ideas and feelings.

Use language, voice, gesture, movement and observation to create character and interact with others in improvisation, rehearsal, and performance.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- reflective thinking
- participate in interpersonal and group activities
- interpret information
- make decisions about process
- conceptualize and observe

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

Drama

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Distribute the handout *Mrs. Arthur* and read it aloud (or ask a student to read it in the role of Mrs. Arthur). Then read the rest of the handout about the little boy. Discuss how this moment in history can come alive through dramatization.

If students are to write a play about this incident in Irish history, they must make some decisions:

Characters: Who are the main characters in this story? What other characters would they add to their play?

Setting: Where will the action take place?

Scenes: How many scenes will students need to tell the story? (This decision is related to students' decisions about setting.) Where does the story begin? Where does it end?

Props: What objects will help tell the story? Will students want to use any music to help tell the story?

Costumes: What simple costumes will help the audience understand the students' play?

Scenery: What will help students suggest the place where this story takes place?

Theme: What do students see as the main idea in the story? How can they help the audience see it too?

2. Have students read the story several times until they have a clear picture of the incident. When students know and understand the story, they will begin to think of what characters might say to one another. Give them names. (Choose names that are typically Irish such as Kathleen, Sean, Caitlin [CAT-Leen], Michael, Bridget, Maureen, Máire [MORE-ah], Tomás [Toe-MAS], Cormac, and Eileen.) Who tells the children that they must go to the workhouse? In what way does he or she speak? How do the children react? Do they protest? How?

3. Ask children to imagine a 10-mile walk without shoes. Ask students to think about what the children would say to one another. Are they strong and brave? Are they weak and afraid? What do they encounter on their journey?

4. What happens when the children arrive at the workhouse? How do they react to the news that they cannot both stay? Will the boy find his way back? How will he survive?
5. Students may choose to write some of the dialogue down on paper, or they may choose to improvise and just speak what is on their minds as they act out the story. Different actors speak different lines because they see characters in different ways. Students may want to try characters and scenes several times until they have created a really interesting and sensitive play.
6. Ask students to create a second act for their play by repeating the steps for Act One. What new decisions must they make? Are there new characters to add? New props? A different setting? What new theme(s) have emerged? How will students show those themes?
7. Students may want to make a video of their plays.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Write a paragraph reflecting on the meaning of Mrs. Arthur's story.

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity is based on the idea of dramatic improvisation. Students may elect to write an actual script for the plays they produce, but the emphasis in this activity is on spontaneous responses to the situation.

Mrs. Arthur

Read the following passage from Asenath Nicholson's *Annals of the Famine in Ireland*. She has arrived in Newport, County Mayo, where there is great suffering. Her friend, Mrs. Arthur, who ran the Newport post office is speaking:

"I have one case to place before you, and will leave all the rest to your own discretion. I have fed a little boy, once a day, whose parents and brothers and sisters are dead, with the exception of one little sister. The boy is seven years old; the sister is five. They were told they must make application to the workhouse at Castlebar which was ten Irish miles away." One cold rainy day in November, this boy took his little sister by the hand, and faint with hunger set off for Castlebar. And now, reader, if you will, follow these little bare-foot, bare-headed Connaught orphans through a muddy road of ten miles, on a rainy day, without food, and see them at the workhouse, late at night. The doors are closed—at last, they succeed in being heard. The girl is received; the boy is sent away—no room for him. He made his way back to Newport the next morning and had lived by crawling into any place he could at night and once a day called at the door of my friend who fed him.

He soon came a fine-looking boy with unusually mature judgment. The servant was paid for taking him into an out building and scrubbing him thoroughly. A nice black suit of clothes was found in the American box with a cap suited to his head. When he was suitably prepared by the servant, the clothes were put on. He had not, probably, been washed for six months and his clothes were indescribable; his skin, which had been kept from wind and sun by the coat which had so long been gathering, was white, and so changed was he wholly and entirely, that I paused to look at him, and tied about his neck a pretty handkerchief, to finish the whole. "What do you say now, my boy? I shall burn your old clothes, and you shall never see them again." A moment's hesitation—he looked up, I supposed to thank me, when to my surprise, he burst into an agony of loud weeping. "What can be the matter?"

He answered, "Now I shall sure die with the hunger; if they see me with nice clothes on, they will say I tell lies, that I have a mother that minds me; and lady, you won't burn them old clothes" (turning to gather them up); and if I had not sternly commanded him to drop them, he would have clasped them close, as his best and dearest friends.

In truth this was a new development of mind I had never seen before, clinging with a firm grasp to a bundle of filthy, forbidding garments, as the only craft by which to save his life; choosing uncleanliness to decency, at an age too when the young emotions of pride generally spring up in fondness for new and pretty garments. The silk handkerchief seemed almost to frighten him. Was it the principle of association, which older people experience when they cling to objects which have been their companions in trial? Or those places where they have seen their dearest comforts depart? He would not have consented to have left those old clothes behind, but by a promise which he could hardly believe; that he should be fed every day through the winter. He was taken immediately to a school where the children were fed once a day and instructed for a penny a week; this penny, the teacher said, should not be exacted, as he had been clothed by me. I saw the boy through the winter; three months after his clothes were tidy and had not been torn, and he was improving.

His fears respecting the "hungry" were not groundless; no stranger would have believed that he needed charity when decently clad."

Source: Asenath Nicholson. *Annals of the Famine in Ireland*. ed. Maureen Murphy. Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1998. pp. 84.
Used by permission of The Lilliput Press, Dublin, Ireland.

"An Old Woman of the Roads": Eviction and Homelessness in Ireland

BACKGROUND

According to the records, families served with eviction notices (1846-1848) and actually evicted (1849-1854) numbered 188,346. A larger number were never even recorded. The handouts in this activity depict how evictions led to homelessness throughout Ireland. The poem "An Old Woman of the Roads" describes the experience of homelessness through the eyes of one old woman.

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *What Do We Know About Hunger?, The Irish Poor Law,* and *An Ejected Family: Illustrating Eviction During the Great Irish Famine.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

An Old Woman of the Roads

Eviction Worksheet: Mrs. McCarron and An Old Woman of the Roads

Newport Evictions

Evictions of the Peasantry in Ireland

The Ejectment

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Daly, Mary E. "Evictions," *The Famine in Ireland*. Dundalk: Dublin Historical Association, 1986. pp.109-113.

Kissane, Noel. "Evictions," *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History.* Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995, pp. 137-151.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Explain how the Irish Famine led to eviction and homelessness.

Describe the reactions of Irish families and the public to evictions.

Appreciate and evaluate literature depicting the evictions during the famine.

Write dramatic monologues in response to "An Old Woman of the Roads" or "The Ejectment."

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.

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)

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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

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

Investigate key events and developments and major turning points in world history to identify the factors that brought about change and the long-term effects of these changes.

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

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 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.

Present information clearly in a variety of oral and written forms such as summaries, paraphrases, brief reports, stories, posters, and charts.

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.

Produce interpretations of literary works that identify different levels of meaning and comment on their significance and effect.

Use improvisation and guided play writing to communicate ideas and feelings.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- evaluate and connect evidence
- observe and conclude
- reflective thinking
- take and defend positions
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- ask and answer logical questions
- interpret information and data
- synthesize information
- reflect upon content/form opinions
- identify patterns and themes

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to think of an object in their homes that gives them pleasure when they look at it and that they associate with *home*. For example, an old worn-out chair, a family photo on the wall, and afghan hand-knit by a relative. Ask them to think of a sound that means home to them. Ask students to write a few words about each so that classmates can *see* the object and *hear* the sound. Students can share their images with their classmates. For example, the sound of a door squeaking could mean that mom is home from work and it is time for dinner. Or the radio or in the background that is always a familiar sound in the kitchen, could remind a child of home.

2. Discuss the handout of Padraic Colum's "An Old Woman of the Roads." Who is the speaker? What happened to her? What sights and sounds does she associate with home? The poem appeals to the senses: sight, sound, touch. Identify a line for each of those senses.

   What is the mood of the poem? Is it weariness, misery, longing, hope, despair, optimism? Explain using evidence from the poem.

   What do students notice about phrases like *crying wind* and *lonesome hush*? Do those phrases sound like what they mean?

   The old woman says she is praying. Could this poem be her prayer?

3. Distribute the *Eviction Worksheet*, *Newport Evictions* and *Evictions of the Peasantry in Ireland*. Students should complete the charts in the handouts in conjunction with the poem "An Old Woman of the Roads."

4. Padraic Colum's father was the Master of the Longford Workhouse. As a boy, Colum would have heard stories of the old people who had been evicted from their little houses during the Great Irish Famine (1845-52). Ask students to look at the handout "The Ejectment" depicting a family being put out of their home. Ask students to describe the scene from the point of view of one of the figures in the picture.

   Would evictions have been a *push factor* in creating the pattern of famine and post-famine Irish emigration?

   Why does the caption use the words and phrases *mockery, flagrant outrage,* and *cheered the landscape*?

5. Ask students to write a dramatic monologue based on one of the figures in "The Ejectment." A dramatic monologue is a poem in which an imaginary character speaks to an imaginary audience.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Use the handouts and essay questions for "Eviction Worksheet: Mrs. McCarron and An Old Woman of the Roads," "Newport Evictions," and "Evictions of the Peasantry in Ireland" for class discussion and writing exercises.

TEACHER REFLECTION

In field tests of this activity the lesson was taught as an example of one of the *push-pull* factors in the American immigration experience.

This activity invites a broader consideration of homelessness in the world today. In one eighth grade class, students read "An Old Woman of the Roads" and discussed the poem and homelessness in the context of Paul Darcy Boles's short story *The House Guest* (1975). The protagonist, a young girl from Northern Ireland staying with an American family, brings her experience of community violence to her concern for the homeless: the stray dogs of her host family's neighborhoods.

This activity can be used with the activity *Wave of Evictions*.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

For advanced students:

Write two Letters to the Editor to an Irish newspaper in the 1800s, accompanying the engraving *The Ejectment.* Take the point of view of a landlord who cannot support families who do not pay their rent, and then as a citizen who is outraged at the evictions.

An Old Woman of the Roads

Oh to have a little house!
To own the hearth and stool and all!
The heaped-up sods upon the fire,
The pile of turf against the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains
And pendulum swinging up and down,
A dresser filled with shining delph,
Speckled and white and blue and brown!

I could be busy all the day
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on their shelf again
My white and blue and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed, and loath to leave
The ticking clock and shining delph!

Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house or bush,
And tired I am of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!

And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying him night and day,
For a little house, a house of my own-
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

Padraic Colum

Source: Padraic Colum. *Selected Poems of Padraic Colum*. Preface by John Sweeney. New York: Devin-Adair, 1953. pp. 90. Permission pending

Eviction Worksheet: Mrs. McCarron and "An Old Woman of the Roads"

Note: This is a story that takes place in Ireland during the Great Irish Famine (1845-52). At that time, many people lived on potatoes. When the potato crop was ruined, there was no food. People also did not have money to pay their rent, so many of them were evicted or put out of their houses. The landlords destroyed their little houses, and the people had to live outdoors. Donegal and Mayo are counties in the west of Ireland where people suffered greatly during the famine. Wattles are long rods or branches that were used to frame the little huts that people built for themselves after they were evicted.

Mrs. McCarron

There was a large number of homeless people from famine-stricken areas in Donegal and Mayo in this district. Many of them became beggarmen and beggarwomen.

An old woman called McCarron and her family were evicted. She had no home, so she went to an old graveyard—Errigal, and in one corner, she built a hut of sods and wattles for herself and her children.

Another beggarwoman and two children came to a house in this locality asking alms. When the children came to the door, they saw pigs in the sty eating food. The children ran over to the trough and started to eat the pigs' food because they were so hungry.

Source: Cathal Póirtéir. *Famine Echoes*, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan. pp. 241. Used with permission of Gill and Macmillan.

Complete the chart with words or phrases that describe Mrs. McCarron's character. Identify information from the article that supports each character trait.

CHARACTER TRAIT	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
1.	
2.	
3.	

What happened to many people during the famine? What did they do? Explain your answer using details from this article.

_____

_____

_____

Read Padraic Colum's poem "An Old Woman of the Roads." What do you think happened to the old woman? What things mean home to her? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

_____

_____

_____

Choose a line or lines from the poem. Discuss the meaning of your selection and explain how it applies to *Mrs. McCarron*. Use ideas from ***BOTH*** the poem and the article in your answer.

In your answer, be sure to include:

- the line or lines you have selected from the poem.
- an explanation of how your selection applies to *Mrs. McCarron*.

Check your writing for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Newport Evictions

But this fearless "driver" throws, or causes to be thrown down, cabin after cabin, and sometimes whole villages, of which it is said the landlord was entirely ignorant; but the pitiless storm heeded not that, and the poor starved exiles pleading that the cabin might be left a little longer. Their pot and even the cloak, which is the peasant woman's all by day and by night, has often has often been torn from her emaciated limbs and sold at auction.

Perhaps in no instance does the oppression of the poor and the sighing of the needy come before the mind so vividly as when going over the places made desolate by the Famine; to see the tumbled cabins, with the poor hapless inmates who had for years sat around their turf fire, and ate their potatoes together, now lingering and oft'time wailing in despair, their ragged barefoot little ones clinging about them, one on the back of the weeping mother, and the father looking in silent despair, while a part of them are scraping among rubbish to gather some little relic of mutual attachment (for the poor, dear reader, have their tender remembrances); then, in a flock, take their solitary, their pathless way to seek rock or ditch to camp supperless for the night, without covering for the head or the feet, with not the remnant of a blanket to spread over them in the ditch, where they must crawl.

Are these solitary cases? Happy would it be were it so, but village upon village and company after company have I seen; and one magistrate who was traveling informed me that at nightfall the preceding day that he found a company that had gathered a few sticks and fastened them into the ditch, and spread over what miserable rags they could collect (for the rain was fast pouring); and under these more than 200 men, women and children were to crawl for the night. He alighted from his car and counted more than two hundred. They had all that day been driven out, and not one pound of any kind of food was in the whole encampment.

Source: Asenath Nicholson. *Annals of the Famine in Ireland*. ed. Maureen Murphy. Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1998. pp. 115.
Used by permission of The Lilliput Press, Dublin, Ireland.

Evictions of the Peasantry in Ireland

The work of undermining the population is going on stealthily, but steadily. Each succeeding day witnesses its devastations—more terrible than the simoon and more deadly than the plague. We do not say that there exists a conspiracy to uproot the "mere Irish," but we do aver, that the fearful system of wholesale ejectment, of which we daily hear, and which we daily behold, is a mockery of the eternal laws of God—a flagrant outrage on the principles of nature.

Whole districts are cleared. Not a roof-tree is to be seen where the happy cottage of the labourer or the snug homestead of the farmer at no distant day [ago] cheered the landscape. The ditch side, the dripping rain, and the cold sleet are the covering of the wretched outcast the moment the cabin is tumbled over him; for who dare give him shelter or protection from "the pelting of the pitiless storm?"

Who has the temerity to afford him the ordinary rites of hospitality, when the warrant has been signed for his extinction? There are vast tracts of the most fertile land in the world in this noble country now thrown out of tillage. No spade, no plough goes near them. There are no symptoms of life within their borders, no more than if they were situated in the midst of the Great Desert—no more than if they were cursed by the Creator with the blight of barrenness. Those who labored to bring those tracts to the condition in which they are—capable of raising produce of any description—are hunted like wolves, or they perish without a murmur.

The tongue refuses to utter their most deplorable—their unheard-of suffering. The agonies endured by the "mere Irish" in this day of their unparalleled affliction are far more poignant than the imagination could conceive or the pencil of a Rembrandt picture. We do not exaggerate; the state of things is absolutely fearful; a demon, with all the vindictive passions by which alone a demon could be influenced, is let loose and menaces destruction. Additional sharpness, too, is imparted to his appetite.

Christmas was accustomed to come with many healing balsams, sufficient to remove irritation, if not stanch wounds; but its place is usurped by other and far different qualifications. The howl of misery has succeeded the merry carol which used to usher in the season; no hope is felt that an end will be soon put to this state of wretchedness. The torpor and apathy which have seized on the masses are only surpassed by the atrocities perpetuated by those who set the dictates of humanity and the decrees of the Almighty at equal defiance.

Source: *Tipperary Vindicator* quoted in *Illustrated London News*, Dec. 16, 1848. John Killen, ed., *The Famine Decade. Contemporary Accounts 1841-1851*. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1995. pp. 206-207.
Used with permission of the publisher.

Complete the chart with words or phrases that describe the evicted people of Newport. Identify information from the article that supports each character trait.

CHARACTER TRAIT	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
1.	
2.	
3.	

What happened to many people during the famine? What did they do? Explain your answer using details from this article.

Read Padraic Colum's poem "An Old Woman of the Roads." What do you think happened to the old woman? What things mean home to her? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

Choose a line or lines from the poem. Discuss the meaning of your selection and explain how it applies to *Newport Evictions*. Use ideas from ***BOTH*** the poem and the article in your answer.

In your answer, be sure to include:

- the line or lines you have selected from the poem.
- an explanation of how your selection applies to *Mrs. McCarron*.

Check your writing for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

Complete the chart with words or phrases that describe the results of the famine evictions. Identify information from *Evictions of the Peasantr*y that supports each result.

RESULTS OF EVICTIONS	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Does writer of *Evictions of the Peasantry in Ireland* suggest that there are higher laws than the law that protects the right of a landlord to recover his property if a tenant fails to pay rent? Explain your answer using details from the article.

Read Padraic Colum's poem "An Old Woman of the Roads." What do you think happened to the old woman? What things mean home to her? Use details from the poem to support your answer.

Choose a line or lines from the poem. Discuss the meaning of your selection and explain how it applies to "EVICTIONS OF THE PEASANTRY IN IRELAND." Use ideas from ***BOTH*** the poem and the article in your answer.

In your answer, be sure to include:

- the line or lines you have selected from the poem.
- an explanation of how your selection applies to *Mrs. McCarron*.

Check your writing for correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

'The ejectment'. (*The Illustrated London News*, 16 Dec. 1848.)

Source: Noel kissane, **The Irish Famine, A Documentary History**.
Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995. p. 141.
Used with permission of the author and the National Library of Ireland.

The Boy Who Fought Back

BACKGROUND

Students often ask why oppressed people did not fight back. Usually the answer is either that they faced overwhelming odds or else that they needed to marshall all of their strength in order to survive. Sometimes small acts of resistance are overlooked. This activity describes one act of resistance. In Asenath Nicholson's narrative about oppression in Ireland during the Great Irish Famine, a boy scatters the flock of cows and sheep that are being taken by drivers accompanied by armed guards. Drivers were men who were employed to seize the stock of people who were in debt. They were also called grabbers. During the famine, cows and sheep of tenants who owed money to their landlords were "driven" as compensation for unpaid rent.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Boy Who Fought Back

Driving Cattle

ADDITIONAL READINGS

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

Póirtéir, Cathal. "Agents, Grabbers and Gombeen Men," *Famine Echoes.* Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1995.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the difficulties in resisting the *drivers* during evictions.

Describe and show appreciation for the courageousness of individuals who *fight back* during trying historical times.

Describe the reactions of feelings of individuals who participated in evictions during the Irish Famine.

Describe how drawings can increase understanding of social history.

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.

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

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.

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 some important historic events and developments of past civilizations.

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

Analyze historic events from around the world by examining accounts written from different perspectives.

Explain the importance of analyzing narratives drawn from different times and places to understand historical events.

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.

Present information clearly in a variety of oral and written forms such as summaries, paraphrases, brief reports, stories, posters, and charts.

Select a focus, organization, and point of view for oral and written presentations.

Use details, examples, anecdotes, or personal experiences to explain or clarify information.

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.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- reflective thinking
- draw conclusions
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- conceptualize and observe
- reflect upon content/form opinions
- consult and interpret primary sources

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to read Nicholson's narrative of the boy who fought back. She mentions the story from the Bible (Genesis 32) of Jacob who was afraid of his brother Esau's anger. He divided his flocks and his people; if Esau attacked one group, the others could escape.

Does Nicholson credit the Irish boy with the same strategy or did he just scatter the flocks?

What happens to the boy for interfering with the drivers? What is the response of the officials?

Why does Nicholson appear to approve of the boy's action?

2. Ask students to choose one of the characters in the narrative (a driver, one of the mounted men, a person whose cattle was seized) and then write an account of the episode for that individual's point of view.

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

Write a first-hand journal account that could have been written by the boy who fought back, followed by a journal account written by those who were "standing in mute despair."

TEACHER REFLECTION

Students might think of this episode in the contexts of other brave individuals such as those who resisted the Nazis in France by establishing a secret Resistance Movement, or the Underground Railroad in the United States, or those who fought injustice like Rosa Parks, and the unknown student who faced down the tank in Tiananmen Square in Beijing. This is a good activity to use in connection with the activity *Heroes of the Great Irish Famine* that profiles individuals of courage and compassion who helped to aid famine victims.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For younger students:

After listening to *The Boy Who Fought Back*, ask students to choose words to write on the board that describe the feelings of each of the participants in the story. Ask students whether the drivers themselves could have felt *sad*, *guilty*, *frustrated*, or *angry*. Discuss why the characters felt as they did.

For advanced students:

Ask students to write a reflective account of what would determine whether an individual would *fight back*. Use resources mentioned in the Teacher Reflection section.

The Boy who Fought Back

Two well-dressed men mounted on fine horses, furnished with pistols, accompanied by a footman, passed and turned into a miserable hamlet, and instantly all was in motion; every man, woman and child who had the strength to walk was out. Soon I perceived the footman driving cow and sheep into the main road, while the armed gentry kept all opposition at bay by showing that death was in their pistols if any showed resistance. It was a most affecting sight. Some were clasping their hands, dropping upon their knees, and earnestly imploring the good God to save their last cow, calf or sheep for their hungry little ones; some were standing in mute despair as they saw their only hope departing while others followed in mournful procession as the cattle and sheep were gathered from every field in the parish and congregated at the foot of a hill, where the brisk "drivers" had collected them to take them, in a flock, to the town.

I followed in that procession. A long hill was before us. The sun was shining upon the clearest sky and lighted up a company which ill contrasted with that of Jacob when he went out to meet his angry brother Esau. The flocks and herds might be as beautiful, but the warlike drivers and ragged, hungry imploring oppressed ones that followed could hardly claim a standing with Jacob and his family. The hill was ascended, and the poor people halted and looking a sad adieu turned back. A few exclaimed, "We're lost, not a ha'penny have the blackguards left to a devil of us." Others spoke not, and a few were weeping. Death must now be their destiny.

All returned but one boy, whose age was about fourteen years. He stood as if in a struggle of feeling, till the people had gone from his sight and the "drivers" were descending the hill on the other side. Instantly, he rushed between the "drivers" and the flock, and before the mouth of these loaded pistols he ran among the cattle, screaming, and put the whole flock in confusion, running hither and thither. The astonished "drivers" threatened death.

The boy heeded nothing but the main point. He scattered and routed the whole flock. The people heard the noise and ran. The "drivers" whether in astonishment or whether willing to show leniency (let their own hearts judge) rode away. The inhabitants exulted and the flocks were soon in the enclosures of their owners. But that noble-minded heroic boy was the wonder. Facing danger alone and saving for a whole parish what a whole parish had not dared to attempt! His name should never be forgotten, and a pension for life is his due.

Source: Asenath Nicholson. *Annals of the Famine in Ireland*. ed., Maureen Murphy. Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1998. pp. 99.
Used with permission of The Lilliput Press, Dublin, Ireland.

'Driving cattle for rent between Oughterard and Galway'. Landlords were entitled to distrain stock or crops in lieu of rent arrears; in cases of eviction, assets were also sometimes seized. (*The Illustrated London News*, 29 Dec. 1849.)

Source: Noel Kissane. **The Irish Famine, A Documentary History**.
Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995. p. 147.
Used with permission of the author and the National Library of Ireland.

New York State Response to the Great Irish Famine

BACKGROUND

When the news of the Irish famine reached North America, charitable individuals and groups worked together to gather money, food and supplies for the suffering poor in Ireland. Many sent their aid in care of the Irish Quakers who had founded the Central Relief Committee in the fall of 1846. Others sent their aid through religious organizations, principally the Roman Catholic Church. This activity focuses on the contributions made by New Yorkers and involves independent research on the part of the students.

RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Diner, Hasia, R. "'The Most Irish City in the Union,' The Era of the Great Migration" in Ronald H. Baylor and Timothy Meagher, eds. *The New York Irish*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. pp. 87-106.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

List New York State contributions on the board (as shown in Learning Experience #1 in this activity).

Materials collected from organizations (listed in Learning Experience #1 in this activity)

Tape recorder and tape for interviews

Computer and software for desktop publishing of the famine relief book

New York State maps

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Research and discover the role that local organizations played in famine relief in the late 1800s.

Design and produce a book about local relief.

Reflect upon their research process, draw conclusions, and make recommendations.

Correspond by writing a letter of appreciation.

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.

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, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts.

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

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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.

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 data bases intended for a general audience.

Use a combination of techniques (e.g., previewing, use of advance organizers, structural cues) to extract salient information from texts.

Make perceptive and well developed connections to prior knowledge.

Select a focus, organization, and point of view for oral and written presentations.

Write and present research reports, feature articles, and thesis/support papers on a variety of topics related to all school subjects.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- observe and conclude
- present information
- participate in interpersonal and group activities
- communicate results of research and projects
- gather information
- interpret information and data
- synthesize information
- consult and interpret primary sources

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

English Language Arts

MULTIPLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Research on site at historical centers, Ancient Order of Hibernians, libraries, local hall of records.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Put the chart below on the board. Ask students to look at the list of counties, cities, and towns which sent aid to the Central Relief Committee in Dublin and locate the places on a map of New York State.

NEW YORK STATE CONTRIBUTORS TO THE CRC, 1847

(By county, city, and town)

Albany	Brooklyn	Floyd, Oneida Co.
Ft. Plain	Glen Cove, L.I.	Goshen
Hicksville, L.I.	Manlius	Newburgh
New York City	Ogdensburgh	Oneida Co.
Onondaga Co.	Oswego Co.	Otsego Co.
Port, NY	Rochester	Sag Harbor, L.I.
Seneca Co.	Sherburne, Chenango Co.	Utica
Watertown	Williamsburgh (Brooklyn)	

Source: *Transactions of the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends During the Famine in Ireland in 1846-1847.* Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1852. Appendix VII, pp. 333-346.

Students can find the location closest to their school and can examine the local census records (1845 New York State or 1850 Federal). What percent of the population was Irish in 1847? Can students hypothesize that there would be strong support from places in 1847 with large numbers of Irish-born? What would account for strong support of famine relief if the census figures records a low percentage of Irish born? (Remember, there were others who sent famine aid who did not go through the CRC, so this is only part of the story; however, students can still hypothesize about the CRC contributors).

2. Working in teams, students can investigate local famine relief efforts. What did people know about the famine? How did they know about it? How was the relief drive organized? How did they raise money for famine relief? Were there any special events organized whose proceeds went to famine relief? Who headed the organization? Were there lists kept of contributors? Who were they?

One group will look at the newspapers of the time; another group will look at other local records for details about the contributions made to famine relief; a third group will interview local historians. That group may want to invite an expert to talk to the class.

Libraries, local historical societies, local church records, Irish studies specialists at local colleges and universities and Irish-American organizations: chapters of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians, Irish cultural societies might have information that would be helpful. Such groups would certainly be interested in what students discover about famine helpers in their communities.

3. Are organizations or businesses who contributed aid during the famine still in the local areas? Students may want to write letters to express their appreciation that their 1847 counterpart was such a good neighbor.

4. Students can organize the information they collect about local famine relief into a book. Be sure to include maps, copies of news stories, copies of period engravings, photographs of people interviewed, art work. Copies can be presented to the school library and to local Irish-American organizations.

5. Ask students to compare present day famine relief efforts with the New Yorkers' response. Is there a relationship between a cultural connection and contributions toward famine relief? What is the public perception of famine? Ask students to survey others about famine perspectives.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Complete a chart indicating the processes that were followed to gather information, what processes were successful, what could have been done differently, and what was learned about conducting research.

TEACHER REFLECTION

This project offers a number of opportunities for students to become familiar with their local history. They can see that a local community played a part in what was a world-wide effort to relieve suffering during the Great Irish Famine. They can become acquainted with sources for local historical research. They will have a chance to work with experts and enthusiasts who will share their knowledge and appreciation for the subject with the students. Finally, they can have a chance to make their own contribution to recording the history of famine rescuers by making a book about local famine relief efforts.

As a follow up, students can engage in a service project in their community or assist people around the world who work in organizations like UNICEF.

Heroes of the Great Irish Famine

BACKGROUND

In this activity, students will be exploring the heroic actions of men and women during the Great Irish Famine. The purpose of this activity is to create a Hall of Great Irish Famine Heroes to provide students with models of people and groups who demonstrated a commitment to relieving suffering. Like educators who plan and teach lessons about rescuers in the European Holocaust curriculum, human rights curricula are best served by presenting positive models to students, and encouraging them to understand that *heroism* appears in many forms.

(Note: This activity can be used in conjunction with *Irish Quakers, Stories of Famine Generosity,* and *New Yorkers Provide Relief During the Great Irish Famine.)*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Famine Heroes

Heroes of the Great Irish Famine (photo packet)

- Caroline Chisholm
- Daniel Donovan, M.D.
- Father Theobald Mathew
- Mrs. Asenath Nicholson
- James Hake Tuke
- Richard Davis Webb

ADDITIONAL READINGS

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

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

Swords, Liam. *In their Own Words: The Famine in North Connacht 1845-1849*. Blackrock: Columbia Press, 1999.

Woodham-Smith, Cecil. *The Great Hunger. Ireland 1845-1849*. NY: Harper and Row, 1962.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Biographies of heroes and famous examples of heroism, card stock, scissors, crayons, markers, colored pencils, or paint, material to make dioramas.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the contributions of heroes of the Great Irish Famine.

Create images of famine heroes on ten trading cards.

Write brief biographies on the back of 10 trading cards they have created to honor famine heroes.

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.

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

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

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

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.

Use a wide variety of strategies for selecting, organizing, and categorizing information.

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

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

- acquire and organize information
- conceptualize
- identify patterns and themes
- communicate results of research
- present information

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to write about someone whom they consider to be a hero, male or female. Ask students to share their writing with the class. Identify characteristics of students' heroes. What is the difference between a hero and a celebrity? In *The Power of Myth,* Joseph Campbell defined a hero as "one who undertakes a journey or task on behalf of others." How does that definition compare with the definition that students developed?
2. Ask students to read the short biographies of some of the heroes of the Great Irish Famine. They will notice that heroes are groups as well as individuals. Ask students to select 10 heroes and create trading cards for each hero. Students will create an image of the hero on one side of the card and write a short description of the hero and her/his/their contribution to relieving suffering during the Great Irish Famine. Students will also include an appropriate quote by or about the hero.
3. Ask students to share their choices with their classmates and create a class Hall of Heroes to display trading cards. Students may chose to make dioramas to illustrate their hero's work for famine relief to go along with their hero essays.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Write an essay nominating one of the trading card heroes for a class Hall of Heroes. How does the nominee demonstrate the characteristics of a hero?

TEACHER REFLECTION

During a field test of this activity, middle school students made dioramas depicting scenes of Ireland during the famine, Irish emigration, the Irish in America and hunger in the world today. Others made a three-minute commercial for relief of world hunger. Students presented their projects at the Student Famine Museum at Hofstra University on Dec. 3, 1999.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

For advanced students:

Discuss these questions: Can anyone be a hero? Can someone be a hero when they never thought that they would behave heroically? Can one plan to be a hero?

Famine Heroes

Abraham Beale

Irish 1793-1847

Abraham Beale owned an ironworks in Cork where he was known throughout the city for his concern for others. During the Great Irish Famine, Beale became one of the secretaries of the Cork Friends Auxiliary Relief Committee and handled the massive correspondence connected with the crisis. While working among the poor Beale contracted typhus and died in August 1847. The *Cork Examiner* said of his famine work that Beale "…crowned a life of usefulness as a citizen and as a man. Mr. Beale was remarkable for his great intelligence, general information and sound common-sense to which were added benevolence, courtesy and kindness." Praising his work for those suffering from the famine and famine-related diseases, Asenath Nicholson wrote of him, "The memory of the just is truly blessed."

The Belfast Ladies' Association for the Relief of Irish Destitution

founded 1847

The Belfast Ladies' Association for the Relief of Irish Destitution met on the first day of 1847 for the purpose of raising a fund to relieve the distress of the poor. The Association's 150 members also visited the poor and built a bath house and laundry for their use. The Association was non-sectarian in its membership and it extended its aid to all the needy, regardless of religious affiliation. The Association founded and supported The Ladies Industrial School where girls could learn skills of needlework and knitting as well as basic education. The Association supported Dr. John Edgar's industrial schools in the poorest parts of the west of Ireland. By 1850, there were thirty-two schools which employed more than 2000 girls and women doing needlework and earned 1000 pounds a year.

William Bennett

English

The English Quaker William Bennett proposed to the Irish Central Relief Committee that seed be distributed to Irish farmers to encourage them to plant more diverse crops. Like Johnny Appleseed, Bennett and his son went to Ireland in 1847 with a supply of seeds purchased at their own expense and spent six weeks traveling through the west of Ireland giving seeds to small farmers to grow turnips, carrots, and mangel-wurzel (a kind of beet). The seeds not only provided other food when the potato crop failed, it allowed those who cultivated the seeds to be independent, rather than rely on charity.

Joseph Bewley

Irish 1795-1851

Joseph Bewley was a Dublin textile merchant who had a great interest in the welfare of others, particularly the young. When the Irish potato crop failed in 1846, Bewley proposed to his fellow Dublin Quakers that they organize some form of relief for those suffering from hunger. Bewley's suggestion grew into the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends, a group that organized soup shops for the poor in Dublin and supported similar soup kitchens in poor areas of the Irish countryside. When there was a concern about expense of the soup and the suggestion was made that they cut back on soup ingredients, Bewley said he would pay the difference himself to maintain the nutritional quality of the soup.

The strain from his famine efforts brought on a fatal heart attack. When Bewley died at 56, he was praised for his generosity.

Samuel Bourne

Irish c. 1790-1864

Samuel Bourne was a landlord with a small estate which included about 70 tenant families. He was an example of a responsible landlord who is remembered in local tradition not only for looking after his own people but for saving tenants on other local estates as well. Bourne invited Dr. John Edgar to establish one of his industrial schools on his estate so his tenants could develop skills for employment.

John Bright

English 1811-1889

John Bright was an English politician who used his skills as an orator and member of the British Parliament to work for social and economic reform. He argued that famine relief should attack the causes of famine rather than simply supply relief for the poor. Bright argued for a program of land reform that would provide for more tenant occupancy of land, a program that anticipated changes that would later be made in Irish land laws. Bright voted to give 50,000 pounds to some of the poor Irish unions (districts). In 1849, Bright went to Ireland to see Irish conditions for himself and he returned to introduce a bill supporting the rights of Irish tenants.

British Relief Association

founded in 1847

The British Association for the Relief of the Extreme Distress in the Remote Parishes of Ireland and Scotland was a private relief organization whose aim was to aid the poor "…who are beyond the reach of the government" with grants of food, fuel and clothing." The association was founded by London businessmen who were advised by Irish Quakers. The Association raised 470,000 pounds, most of which were spent for relief in Ireland. One of their programs funded meals for Irish schoolchildren.

William Butler

Irish d.1848

William Butler accepted a government appointment as a Poor Law Inspector because he was concerned that relief be distributed justly. He served as Inspecting Officer for the Belmullet and Binghamstown regions of Co. Mayo from May 1846 until September 1847. An exception to many of the bureaucratic government famine officials, Butler was kind and compassionate. He supported local industry and made the best use of the means provided him. When he left his position, the Erris Relief Committee offered an Address of Thanks that praised his temper, his energy and his intelligence.

Caroline Chisholm

English 1808-1877

Caroline Chisholm devoted herself to the service of others. When her husband, a captain in the East India Company, developed poor health in his Indian posting, the Chisholms moved to Windsor, near Sydney, Australia, in 1838. Chisholm worked with immigrant girls arriving in Australia and campaigned for a home for homeless girls. She established an employment bureau for the girls and organized parties of immigrants to travel into the interior which she led riding her white horse *Captain*. During the Great Irish Famine, Chisholm, then in England, wrote to the government about the number of letters she had received from the Irish begging for assistance to join their families in New South Wales. She proposed a scheme for family reunification and set up an emigration information center in her home in Islington. While Chisholm herself was in England in 1848, teenage Irish girls were sent to Australia from workhouses; her earlier immigrant home provided the model for the immigrant home at Hyde Park Barracks which is now the site of the Australian Great Irish Famine memorial. When she died in 1877, her tombstone was marked "The Emigrant's Friend."

Daniel Donovan M.D.

Irish 1808-1877

Daniel Donovan was local dispensary doctor in Skibbereen, Co. Cork and the first medical officer appointed to the Skibbereen Work House. His articles in the medical journals of the day: *Lancet*, the *Dublin Journal of Medical Sciences* and the *Dublin Medical Press* and his "Diary of a Dispensary Doctor" which appeared in *Southern Reporter* in 1847 and 1848 kept the suffering of Skibbereen before the medical community and the wider world. Donovan became an authority on the causes of famine-related deaths. The *Dublin Medical Press* praised his courage and his humanity saying "his name has become a household word for pure philanthropy and most earnest and unselfish devotion to the poor when famine and pestilence swept over Ireland."

Dr. John Edgar

Irish 1798-1866

John Edgar was a reformer who was active in the temperance movement before the Great Irish Famine. During the famine, he worked vigorously to try to stop the use of grain for making alcohol. With the support of the Belfast Ladies' Relief Association he started the Connaught Industrial Schools to provide employment and well as instruction in needlework and textile manufacturing for women and girls. By 1850, 2,000 girls and women in 32 Connaught schools earned 1,000 pounds a year.

Maria Edgeworth

Irish 1767-1849

The Irish novelist Maria Edgeworth was born in England, but her family returned to Edgeworthstown, their Irish estate in County Longford, in 1782. Edgeworth's father Richard Lovell Edgeworth, was a model landlord: resident, responsible and progressive, and it was Maria who assisted him in running his estate and shared his interest in educational reform. After her father's death in 1817, Maria Edgeworth managed the estate for her brother. Edgeworth's international reputation as a writer brought barrels of meal from her American admirers, including the children of Boston, for her to distribute to the poor. Her own concerns were that her tenants be given work and the means to work (clothing, boots) rather than relief, and she lobbied the government to provide employment opportunities.

John Christopher Garvey

Irish c. 1808-1856

The poor in the west of Ireland suffered most from the famine. In Co. Mayo there was a special burden on the resident landlords to fund local relief efforts, to work on their local relief committees and to provide employment for their tenants. The Garvey family of western Mayo were local landlords who stood by their tenants. Even before the famine, in 1842, the *Connaught Telegraph* praised John Christopher Garvey of Murrisk "...who employs an immense number of labourers." During the famine Garvey, who chaired the Relief Committee for Kilgeever Parish, took out a personal loan to provide employment for his tenants.

Horace Greeley

American

Before the Great Irish Famine, Horace Greeley worked as a volunteer among the poor, many of whom were Irish immigrants, in the crowded slums of the Sixth Ward of New York City. During the Great Irish Famine, the Liberal editor of the *New York Tribune* used the pages of his paper to keep New Yorkers aware of the famine in Ireland and to urge readers to contribute to relief in Ireland.

Jacob Harvey

Irish-American d. 1848

The Quaker New York merchant Jacob Harvey became actively involved in relief for the Irish poor when he received a letter early in 1847 from Jonathan Pim of Dublin written after Pim had visited the west of Ireland. Jacob Harvey circulated the letter and called a meeting in New York to found the Irish Relief Committee of New York, which served as the center for American relief funds and supplies. Harvey worked closely with Bishop Hughes of New York collecting relief for Ireland. Not only did Harvey serve as the liaison with the Dublin Central Relief Committee, he also worked with the arriving Irish. In 1847, he was appointed one of the Board of Emigration Commissioners. Like many of his fellow relief workers, he died from overwork.

Susan Hewittson

Irish

Little is known about Susan Hewittson except that she managed her own relief effort from the kitchen of her home in Rossgarrow, Co. Donegal with the help of small grants and her own resources. She received one grant of 10 pounds from the Central Relief Committee to use to develop employment for local women. She is one of those women who quietly worked to help to poor and who has been overlooked by history.

Lord George Hill

English 1801-1979

Lord George Hill purchased about 23,000 acres around Gweedore, a mountain area on the west coast of Co. Donegal. He planned to improve the land and the conditions of his tenants. He built a store where his tenants could sell their crops and buy supplies at fair prices. He wrote an account of his work called *Facts from Gweedore*. Published in three editions: 1845,1846, and 1854, it describes Gweedore before and after the famine so the reader could see the difference an improving landlord made to his tenants. The English reformer James Hack Tuke who visited the west of Ireland in 1847 contrasted Hill's efforts to improve the conditions of his tenants with the neglect on the neighboring estate of the Marquis of Conyngham.

Very Rev. John Hughes

Irish 1797-1864

Born in Co. Tyrone, John Hughes emigrated with his family to America in 1817. He became a priest in 1825, bishop of New York in 1842, and later New York's first Archbishop (1850). Known as *Dagger John*, Hughes confronted anti-Catholic nativism In New York. He helped to organize and administer relief funds for Ireland during the Great Irish Famine. On March 20, 1847, Hughes delivered a stern lecture about the failure of the Russell government to place the rights of human life over the rights of property.

A supporter of the Union who traveled to Europe for Lincoln to explain the cause, Hughes helped to restore order during the Draft Riots of 1863. He died the following year.

Rev. Francis Kinkead

Irish 1812-1847

Francis Kinkead was the Church of Ireland curate of Kilmoremoy, near Ballina, Co. Mayo from 1837-1847. A man of great charity and a tireless relief worker, Kinkead organized employment for the poor of Ballina. One of the last things he did was to found the Ballina Ladies' Institution. When he died, the *Tyrawly Herald* said, "his memory is enshrined in the hearts of the poor of the neighborhood." Catholics as well as Protestants contributed to a memorial with an inscription that concluded:

> His work of faith and labor of love were terminated by
> typhus fever contracted in his unwearying efforts to
> relieve the wants of the poor
> during the season of grievous famine.

Mary Ann McCracken

Irish 1770-1866

Mary Ann McCracken was a member of a distinguished Belfast family. Her grandfather founded the *Belfast Newsletter* in 1737; her family were merchants, and Mary Ann herself founded a muslin business when she was still a teenager. Her brothers Henry Joy and William McCracken were involved in the radical politics of the United Irishmen. When they were jailed for their political activities, she managed the family business. When Henry Joy was sentenced to be hanged for his part in the 1798 Rebellion, Mary Ann made the arrangements for his failed attempt to escape. She accompanied Henry Joy to his execution.

She devoted the rest of her life to the preservation of Irish cultural tradition and to social causes. She was Secretary of the Ladies Committee of the Belfast Poorhouse for twenty-five years. Although she was seventy-seven in 1847, she was still one of the leaders of the Belfast Ladies' Association.

Fr. Bernard McGauran

Irish 1821-

Father McGauran emigrated to Quebec as a young man where he studied for the priesthood and was ordained in 1846. He was one of the first priests assigned to the immigrant depot at Grosse Isle where shiploads of Irish arrived suffering from fever. Father McGauran contracted typhus after his first month on the island. When he recovered, he returned to Grosse Isle. He was the last priest still on the island in the autumn of 1847.

Mary Martin

Irish 1815-1850

Known as the "Princess of Connemara," Mary Martin inherited a vast estate from her father, Thomas Barnewell Martin, that he had heavily mortgaged. In 1846-47 she used her money to create employment for her tenants and to provide other kinds of relief. Those expenses made her unable to meet her mortgage payments and she lost her estate. Penniless, Mary Martin and her family went to Belgium where she supported her family with her writing. They emigrated to New York where she died in childbirth in 1850.

Fr. Theobald Mathew

Irish 1790-1856

Before the Great Irish Famine, Father Mathew was well-known in Ireland and abroad for his work promoting the cause of temperance. He was among the first to realize the severity of the famine and to call the British government's attention to the crisis in Ireland. He started a soup kitchen for the poor of Cork in the summer of 1846 and kept it going through 1847 where he fed between 5000 and 6000 people with Indian meal. Father Mathew also provided the means to build a cemetery for Catholics in Cork City. Between September 1, 1846 and June 1, 1847, 10,000 people were buried at St. Joseph's.

Asenath Hatch Nicholson

American 1792-1855

Asenath Nicholson was born on the New England frontier. Trained as a teacher, she taught in Chelsea, Vermont, before she moved to New York. She became interested in health and diet and Nicholson and her husband opened a boardinghouse that followed the teaching of Sylvester Graham, the man who invented the graham cracker. People who lived at Nicholson's boarding house could not use alcohol, tea or coffee and they could not eat meat.

During those years, Nicholson worked among the poor of New York in the old Five Points district, where many newly-arrived Irish immigrants lived. She developed a great affection for the Irish and was determined to visit Ireland to "personally investigate the condition of the Irish poor." She went to Ireland in May 1844 and spent more than a year walking around the country reading the Bible to the poor.

She returned to Ireland in December 1846 where she devoted herself to famine relief until September 1848. She ran her own famine operation in Dublin ministering to families in the "Liberties," the poor area around St. Patrick's Cathedral. In the summer of 1847, Nicholson traveled to the famine-ravaged areas of the west of Ireland where she worked among the poor through the terrible winter of 1847-48.

Nicholson wrote to friends in America and in England describing the conditions of the poor and appealing for relief. Her first book, *Ireland's Welcome to the Stranger* (1847), was written to raise money to feed the poor. Her account of Great Irish Famine, *Annals of the Famine in Ireland* (1851)[1998], is one of the most remarkable documents we have of that time.

Presentation Sisters, Cork

The Sisters of the South Presentation Convent on Douglas Street, Cork, worked closely with Father Mathew who was chaplain to that community. Their record of their relief work during the Great Irish Famine is recorded in their Annals with the modest entry, "During the years of 1846-47 when God visited this Cork City by Famine, Father Mathew spent nearly every half-penny of which he was possessed in relieving the poor starving children. He had a host of friends who gladly opened their purses to him. By this means he was able to feed and keep the spark of life in them. We experienced his generosity more than others. Flour and meal come to us from America which we dispensed for a lengthened period among poor children until God sent brighter times and removed the Scourge."

Mr. and Mrs. Richard Savage

Irish

Richard Savage was a coastguardsman who opened a hotel at Achill Sound where he had a reputation as a reliable guide for fishermen and sportsmen. During the famine, the Central Relief Committee sent relief supplies to the Savages to distribute among the poor of the Achill Sound area. Like many local relief workers, we know very little about their lives except that they are remembered in local tradition for their generosity toward the poor during the Great Irish Famine.

Rev. Samuel Stock and Mrs. Stock

Irish

Samuel Stock was the Rector of Kilcommon-Erris and Chairman of the Erris Relief Committee. The Stocks were the chief organizers of relief efforts in the the northwestern area of County Mayo, an area particularly hard hit during the Great Irish Famine. Mrs. Stock ran a soup kitchen in her rectory and set up a clothing industry with local women until an outbreak of fever interrupted their work. The Stocks not only helped their own 70 tenant families, they helped other poor.

James Hack Tuke

English 1819-1896

James Hack Tuke was a Quaker from York whose family were among the first to promote the cause of humane treatment for the mentally ill. Tuke traveled to Ireland in 1846-47 with William Forster. His second Irish tour was the subject of his book, *A Visit to Connaught in the Autumn of 1847*. The book was controversial because it condemned certain landlords for evicting their tenants.

Richard Davis Webb

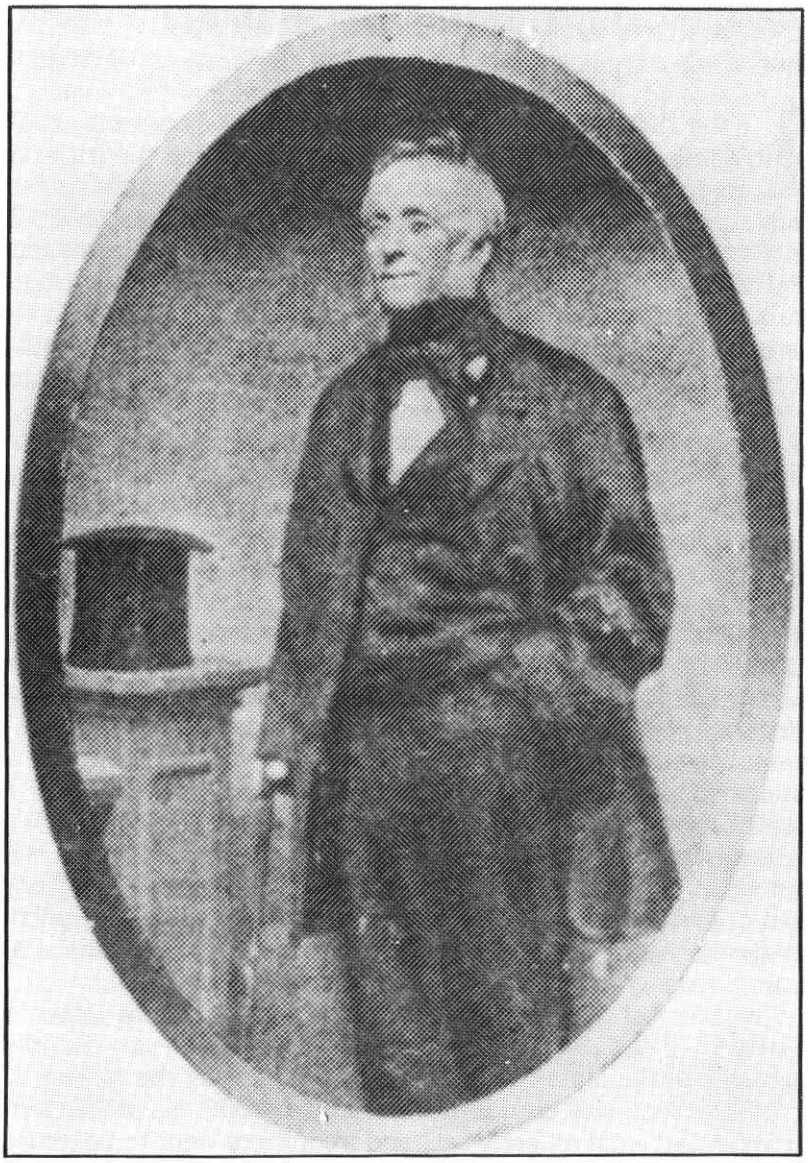
Irish 1805-1872

The Dublin printer Richard Davis Webb was a Quaker who worked for temperance, peace and abolitionism. William Lloyd Garrison was a close friend. He entertained Frederick Douglass when Douglass visited Dublin. During the Great Irish Famine, Webb was a member of the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends. He traveled to the west of Ireland on behalf of the CRC in the spring of 1847 to investigate famine conditions, to evaluate the relief efforts supported by the Central Relief Committee and to advise them about additional aid to the poor.

Source: Maureen Murphy. *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum* Committee.

MRS. CHISHOLM.—FROM A DAGUERREOTYPE BY BEARD.

Source: *The Illustrated London News*, April 17, 1852. pp. 302.



Dr. Daniel Donovan (1808-1877) — it was he, perhaps more than any other person, who helped to focus world attention on Skibbereen and district in 1847 and 1848. His 'Diary of a Dispensary Doctor' in the "Southern Reporter" newspaper during 1847 and 1848, as well as his contributions to various medical journals — "Lancet", the "Dublin Journal of Medical Science" and the "Dublin Medical Press" — give us detailed and vivid accounts of the state of affairs in this area during the famine.

Source: Pat Cleary and Philip O'Regan, eds. *Dear Old Skibbereen*. Skibbereen: Skibbereen Printers, 1995. pp. 28. Used with permission of the editors.

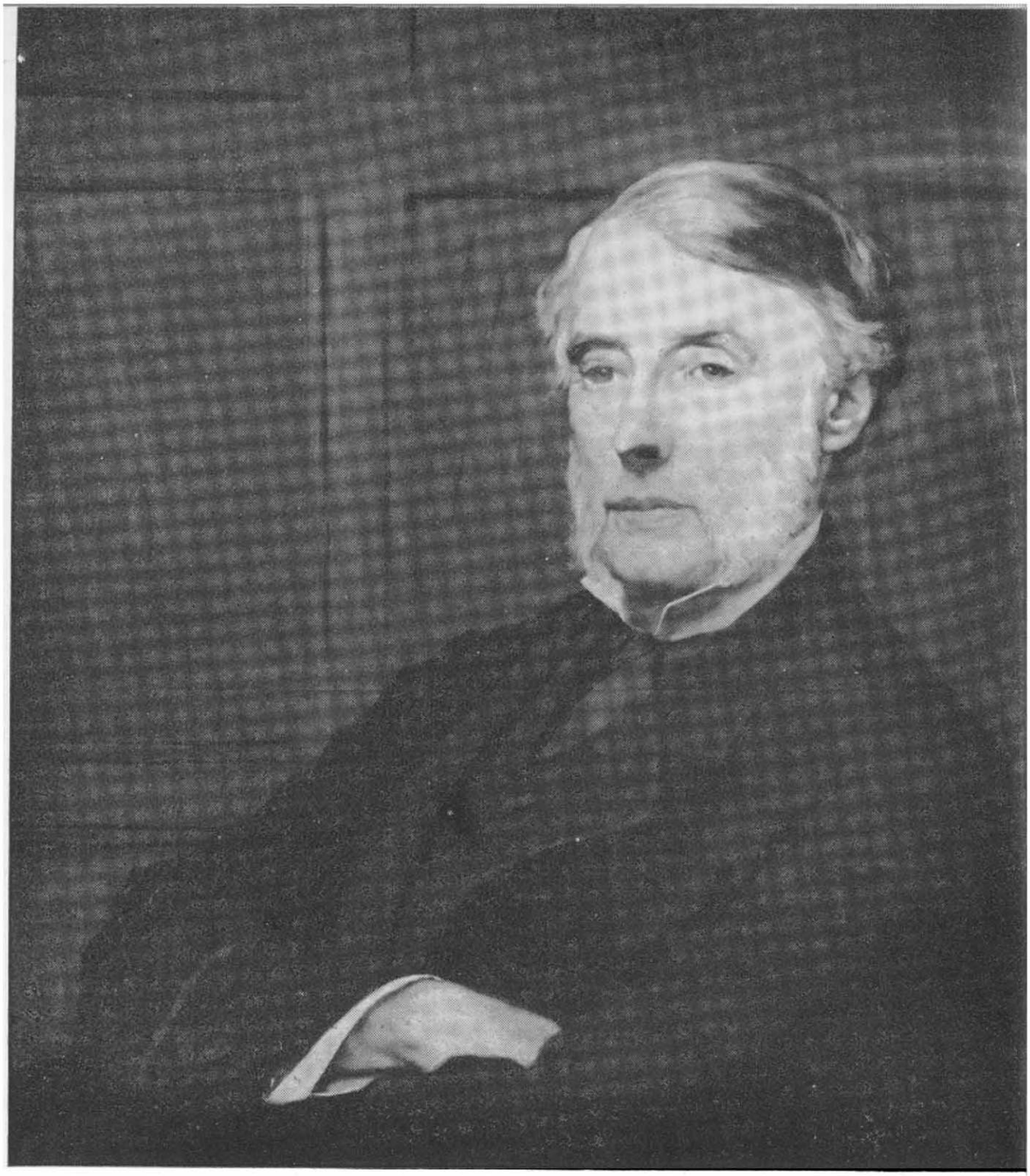
FATHER MATHEW

Source: Hulton Picture Library. Permission pending.

Mrs. Asenath Nicholson.

From a drawing by Anna Maria Howitt.

Source: *Howitts' Journal of Literature*. Reprinted in Asenath Nicolson, *Annals of the Famine in Ireland.* Maureen Murphy ed., Dublin: The Lilliput Press, 1998. Fronticepiece.
Used with permission of the Lilliput Press.

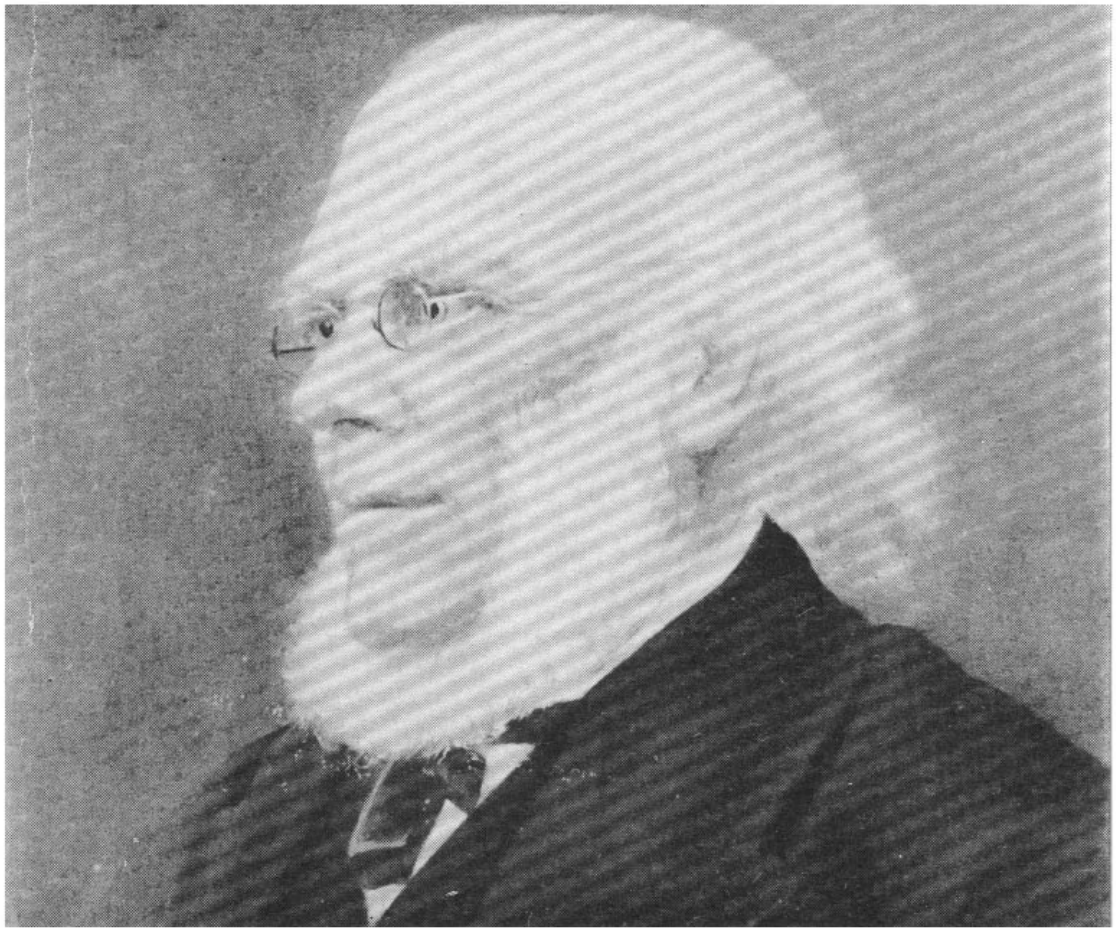


JAMES HACK TUKE

From a photograph

By permission of E. C. W. Tuke, Esq.

Source: Photograph reproduced in Cecil Woodham-Smith. *The Great Hunger*. New York: Harper, 1962. Permission pending.



Richard Davis Webb

Source: Photograph. Dublin Society of Friends Library, Dublin, Ireland.
Reprinted by permission of the Society of Friends, Dublin.

The Long March: The Choctaw Council

BACKGROUND

This activity (and five others) is based on the book *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick (see Additional Readings). The other activities are also titled *The Long March* and address the true story of the impoverished Choctaw Native Americans' contribution of $170, sent to Ireland in 1847. The story encourages students to think about what individuals can do to alleviate suffering around the world. In *The Long March,* the ancient tribal values of the Choctaw help the main character, Choona, to resolve this and other challenging questions.

This activity introduces students to the concept of shared decision-making in the Choctaw Council.

RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL READINGS

"Choctaw," in James Ciment, *Scholastic Encyclopedia of North American Indians*. New York Scholastic Reference, 1996. pp. 51-52.

Cushman, H.B. The *History of the Choctaw, Chickasaw and the Natchez Indians.* Tulsa: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999.

Fitzpatrick, Marie-Louise. *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.* Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 1998.

Harrell, Beatrice. *Longwalker's Journey.* New York: Penguin, 1999.

Lepthien, Emi. *The Choctaw.* New York: New True Book, 1987.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the purpose and process of the Choctaw Council Meetings.

Describe the significance of family names and nicknames.

Describe the significance of family story-telling.

Compare personal and Choctaw family structure.

Recognize the characteristics of a particular narrative voice.

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.

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.

Present information clearly in a variety of oral and written forms such as summaries, paraphrases, brief reports, stories, posters, and charts.

Select a focus, organization, and point of view for oral and written presentations.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- develop analytical thinking
- observe and conclude
- reflective thinking
- participate in interpersonal and group activities
- work with others to solve problems

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Prior to this activity, read *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.*

1. As children enter the room, they see that all the lights are out except for a single small light. Children take their seats, preferably set up in a circle. Establish a *fire* in the center of the circle. It is a meeting of the Choctaw Council.

The council meeting begins around the fire with Old Tom's story of the long march. If possible, the reader speaks in an old man's voice:

> *I am an old man, and my name is Tom. When I was a young boy, everyone called me Choona. Choona means skinny one. I was fourteen in 1847. I remember that year very well. I was playing with ball sticks when father and my uncle Moshi arrived home from Skullyville. They brought many trade goods for everyone: my mother, my grandmother, my great-grandmother and my sisters Talowa and Hoshoni. They brought silver combs, glass beads, some bolts of bright cloth, a new cooking pot, and a new ax.*

Ask students to respond to the following words and how they might relate to the Choctaw council:

somber	future	serious	decisions
community	lessons	supportive	family
history			

2. Ask students: How many people are there in your family? Name them. How many were in Choona's family? Name the members of Choona's family. (Choona, his father, his mother, his two sisters, his mother's brother Uncle Moshi, his grandmother and his great-grandmother.) What is the difference in size between your family and Choona's family? How many generations live together in Choona's family? If your grandparents and your mother and father's brothers and sisters lived with you, how many people would live in your house?

How are decisions made in your family? Do children take part in decision making? Discuss how decisions are made in Choona's family?

3. Choona has two sisters. One is called Talowa which means *song* and the other Hoshoni which means *cloud*. Choona's great-grandmother was called Talihoyo, *Rock Woman*, because when she was a young girl working in the corn field, enemy warriors arrived; she encouraged the other young women to throw rocks at the warriors and they ran back over the river. After that she was called Rock Woman and was respected for her courage.

Ask students: What do the names of people in your family mean? Do any people in your family have nicknames? Rock Woman is given her name because of her courage. What is courage? Are there any stories of people who you know who have done courageous things?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

What are the reasons that people tell stories? Why do older people tell stories to younger people? Write down a story that has been told in your family. Why is that story important to your family?

TEACHER REFLECTION

Teachers may wish to use the Council's shared decision-making approach for students to reach consensus on class-related issues such as sharing supplies, noise level, respect, etc.
For several years during the 1990s, there was a memorial walk through the Doolough Pass in Co. Mayo, Ireland to remember the Irish famine victims who died along the road. Members of the Choctaw nation participated in that walk.

(Note that this activity can be part of a unit on Native Americans.)

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For younger and advanced students:
Practice telling a story that you will deliver to your class. Make sure there is a message that you are trying to convey with the story. What will your audience learn from your story?

Text source: Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick, *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.* Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 1998.
Reprinted by permission of Triangle Press and Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick.

The Long March: Where is Ireland?

BACKGROUND

This activity (and five others) is based on the book *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick (see Additional Readings). The other activities also are titled *The Long March* and address the true story of the impoverished Choctaw Native Americans' contribution of $170, sent to Ireland in 1847. The story encourages students to think about what individuals can do to alleviate suffering around the world. In *The Long March,* the ancient tribal values of the Choctaw help the main character, Choona, to resolve this and other challenging questions.

In this activity students learn about the location and terrain of Ireland. They will create their own maps.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Ireland—Mountains Map

Ireland—Rivers Map

ADDITIONAL READINGS

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

Fitzpatrick, Marie-Louise. *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.* Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 1998.

Irish National Committee for Geography, *Atlas of Ireland.* Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1979.

Orme, A.R. *Ireland*. The World's Landscape Series. Chicago: Aldine, 1970.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

World map

Maps of New York and Ireland

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the geographical location and topography of Ireland.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Locate places within the local community, state, and nation.

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

Understand how to develop and use maps and other graphic representations to display geographic issues, problems and questions.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- gather information
- ask and answer logical questions
- apply information gathered in discussion
- record data

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Prior to this activity, read *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.*

1. In *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief,* Choona's father and uncle have returned from Skullyville with town goods for each member of the family. The men attended a meeting of the tribal leaders and have returned with news of the Choctaw nation and the news of a great famine across the ocean in a country called Ireland. The Choctaw have been asked to help those in need. Ask students: If you were to tell Choona and his family about Ireland, what would you say? Where is Ireland located? Can you find it on the globe or on a map of the world? What things do you notice about it? (It is an island, it is the closest European country to America, it is next to England, etc.)
2. Choona and his family live in the part of the country that is now the state of Oklahoma. Look at the part of Oklahoma that is closest to Ft. Smith, Arkansas. How far is that from Ireland? How would you measure that distance? If Choona and his family could have gone to Ireland in 1847, how would they have traveled? What route would they have taken?

   Distribute maps of Ireland. Ireland's greatest length is 302 miles; its greatest width is 189 miles. New York State is 310 miles north to south and 220 miles east to west. Can you put an area 302 miles by 189 miles inside New York State? How would it fit? (The distance from New York to Plattsburgh is 319 miles. Seneca Falls is 201 miles west from Albany.)

   Now ask students to look at the map of New York State. Where are the mountains? Ireland is shaped like a saucer with mountains around the outside: the northeast, the southeast, the southwest, the west and the northwest coasts. Put mountains on your map of Ireland.

   Ireland has a number of rivers. The most important is the River Shannon. Notice how it sort of divides the country between east and west. Does New York State have any rivers or bodies of water that divide the state into north/south or east/west regions? Why are bodies of water often the boundaries between states or nations?

   The center of Ireland is bog: soft and spongy land. In New York State, some of the land along the Erie Canal is bogland. Ask students: Do you know any boggy land? What does it look like? What grows in bogs? Can farmers use bog land? (Cranberries grow in bog land.) The word bog in the Irish language means *soft*. Do you see any connection between the Irish word and land called a bog? Make the center of Ireland boggy on your map. What symbol would you use?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

If you were to write a letter to Choona, what would you tell him about Ireland? Where is it? Tell him three or more facts about Ireland's topography.

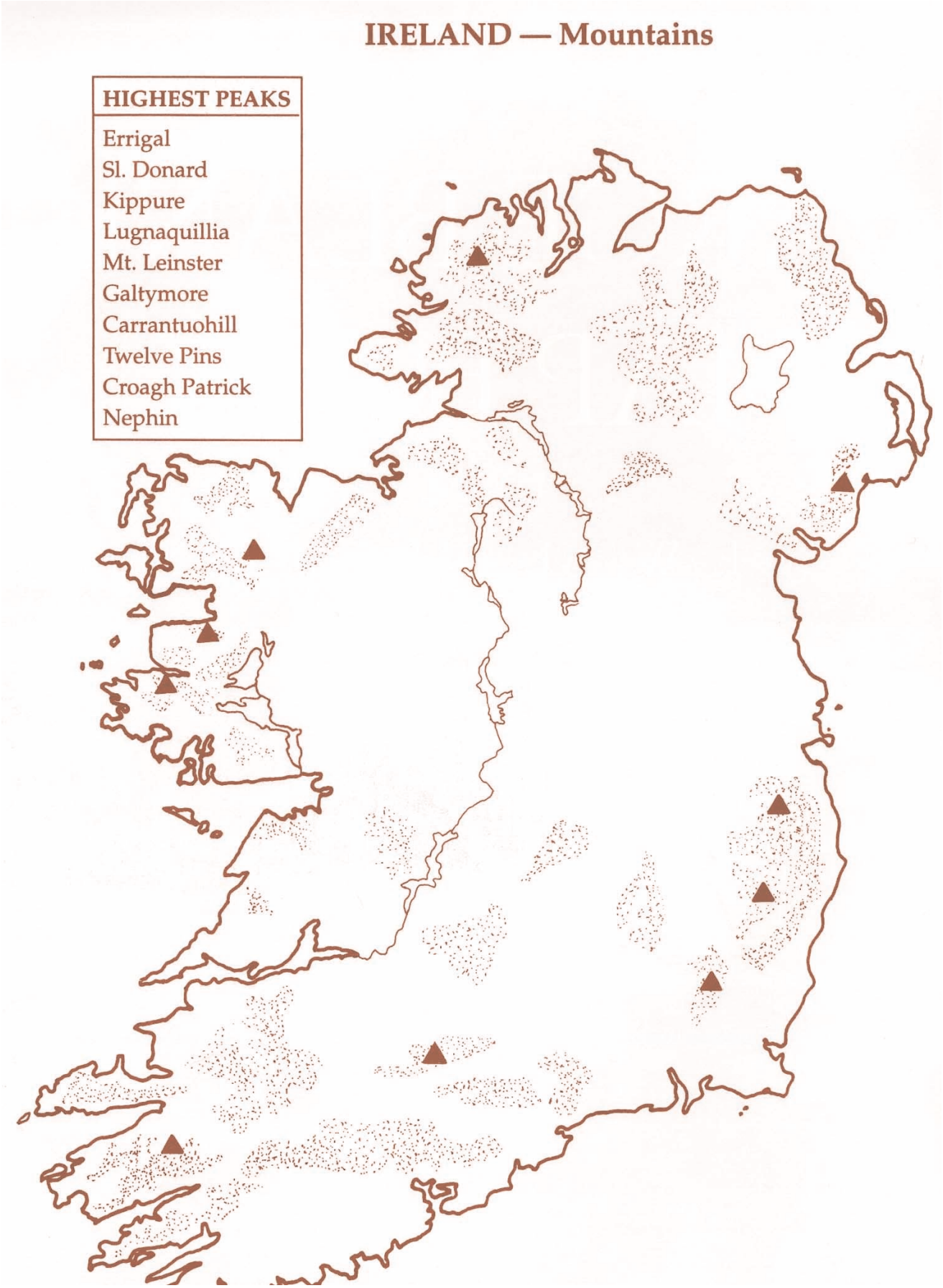
TEACHER REFLECTION

This is an opportunity for students to think about what kinds of geographical details define a place. They might start by thinking about their own locale and its defining geographic features.

The comparative aspects of this activity lend themselves to a lesson that introduces work with an atlas. The *Atlas of the Irish Rural Landscape* (see Additional Readings) is especially recommended for its coverage of Irish topography and for its synthesis of geography, human habitation and daily life.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

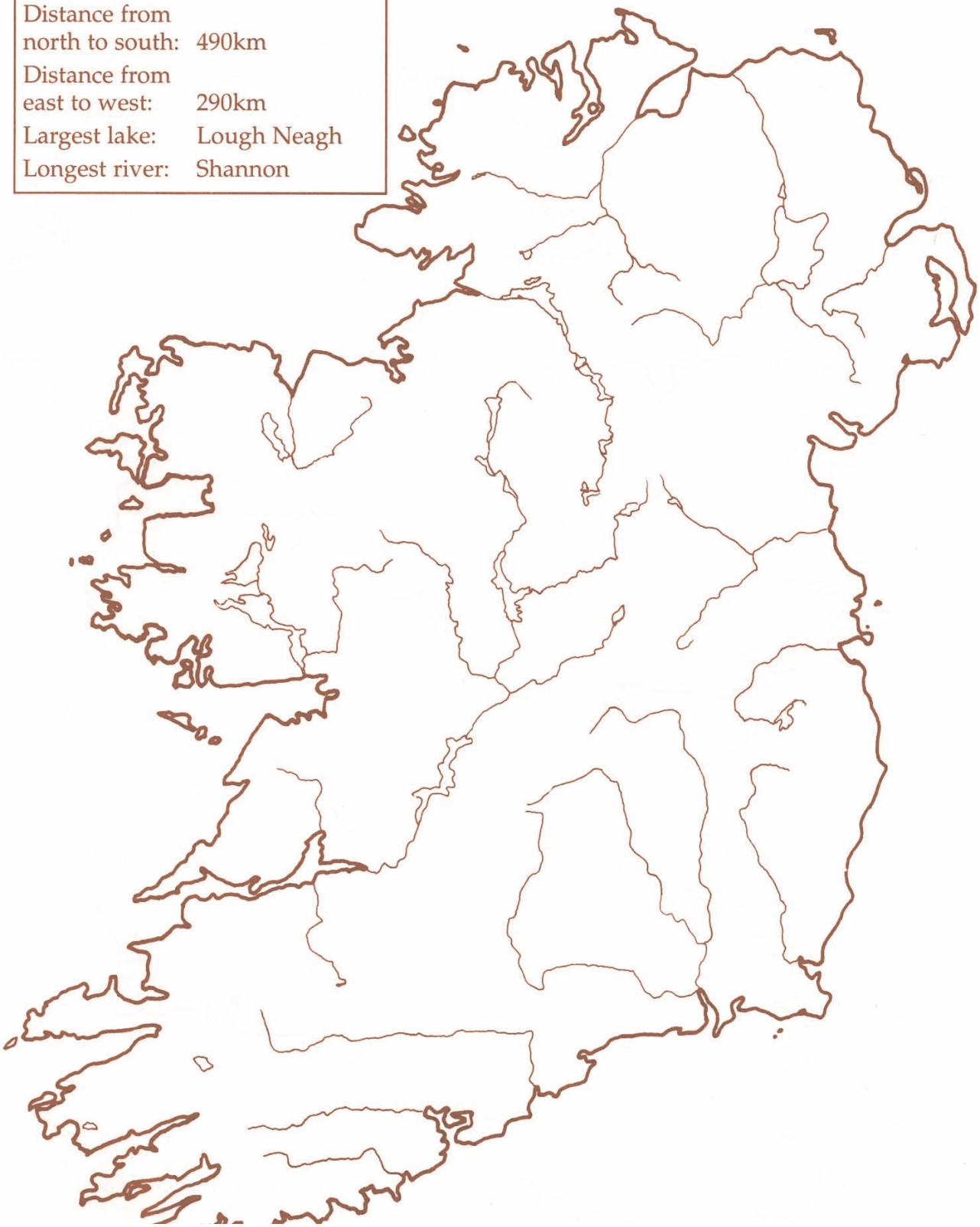
In Ireland during the Great Irish Famine, many poor people lived on mountain lands or boggy lands and grew potatoes to eat. Can potatoes grow easily on moist, boggy soil? Research the best conditions for growing potatoes. Try growing potatoes in moist peat moss. A student potato-growing experiment is described in Caroline Gonzales, "Kids Learn a Lesson in Crisis. Explore Reasons for Irish Famine," *New York Daily News*, October 19, 1999. KSI. pp. 2-3.



Source: C.J. Fallon. *Large Blank Map Book*, new ed. Dublin: C.J. Fallon, 1997.
Used with permission of the publisher.

IRELAND — Rivers, Lakes

IRELAND: FACTS	
Area:	About 82,000km^2
Distance from north to south:	490km
Distance from east to west:	290km
Largest lake:	Lough Neagh
Longest river:	Shannon



Source: C.J. Fallon. *Large Blank Map Book*, new ed. Dublin: C.J. Fallon, 1997.
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The Long March: The Choctaw And the Great Irish Famine

BACKGROUND

This activity (and five others) is based on the book *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick (see Additional Readings). The other activities are also titled *The Long March* and address the true story of the impoverished Choctaw Native Americans' contribution of $170, sent to Ireland in 1847. The story encourages students to think about what individuals can do to alleviate suffering around the world. In *The Long March,* the ancient tribal values of the Choctaw help the main character, Choona, to resolve this and other challenging questions.

In this activity, students are introduced to *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* and the relationship between the Choctaw Nation's council meeting and the Great Irish Famine.

RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Eames-Sheavly, Marcia and Tracy Farrell. *The Humble Potato*. Ithaca: Media Services, Cornell University, 1995. pp. 16-19.

Fitzpatrick, Marie-Louise. *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.* Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 1998.

Litton, Helen. *The Irish Famine: An Illustrated History.* Minneapolis: Irish Books and Media, 1994.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

5-pound bag of potatoes (one potato per student)

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Explain the connection between the Choctaw Nation and the Great Irish Famine.

Describe the elements of *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* that depict the importance of international support for suffering nations.

Create stories related to *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* and 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.

HPEFCS 1: Students will have the necessary knowledge and skills to establish and maintain physical fitness, participate in physical activity, and maintain personal health.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Gather and present information about important developments from world history.

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

Explain the importance of analyzing narratives drawn from different times and places to understand historical events.

Ask specific questions to clarify and extend meaning.

Compare and synthesize information from different sources.

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

Produce interpretations of literary works that identify different levels of meaning and comment on their significance and effect.

Write stories, poems, literary essays, and plays that observe the conventions of the genre and contain interesting and effective language and voice.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- evaluate and connect evidence
- observe and conclude
- probe ideas and assumptions
- reflective thinking
- interpret information
- draw conclusions

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

UNITY AND DIVERSITY

similar concerns of different nations

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Read *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* together as a class, pausing to share observations and conclusions.

1. Give each student a potato. Explain that in Ireland before the famine, adult men ate about fourteen pounds of potatoes each day. Women and older children ate about eleven pounds of potatoes. Children ate five or six pounds. The only way they could cook the potatoes was to boil them over an open fire. Ask students: Do you eat potatoes? How do you like to eat them? What kind of recipes does your family have for cooking potatoes? If you could only have one potato a day, when would you eat it? When your only potato was gone what would you do?
2. Discuss with students how Moshi told the council meeting that the poor people in Ireland lived on potatoes and that the potatoes were rotting in the ground because of a disease called blight, a fungus that attacks potatoes before methods were developed to protect potatoes from blight. Ask students how they would react if they were told about a problem that was halfway around the world. Have they heard about international events that do not seem to be relevant to their lives? What do they generally do when they hear about people who are struggling? Have they ever received assistance from a stranger? Have they ever received help from someone far away? Why is it often difficult to respond to the needs of other individuals and countries? Point out that when Choona's mother heard about the Great Irish Famine, she

said, "What does that have to do with us?" Choona's Uncle Moshi said, "This story is our story." What did he mean?

3. What was the story of the Great Irish Famine? The blight came first in 1845. It returned in 1846, 1848, and 1849. Since the Irish depended on their potatoes for food, they had little to eat. The price of available food went up. Why did that happen? Why wasn't food provided? Many Irish left their country during the Great Irish Famine. Why?

   There was very little work for people in the Irish countryside. The government started some work like road building, but there was not enough work, and the money people earned often was not enough to buy food. People also did not have the money to pay the rents on their little plots of land where they lived. Some kind landlords gave their tenants more time or let them pay less, but other landlords made their tenants leave and then destroyed their little houses. What do you think happened when families were evicted?

   Many poor Irish started their own journeys, traveling the roads to find another place to live, or, if they had a little money or relatives in the United States, they made their long journey across the ocean to a new life. Both the Irish and the Choctaw had to leave their own places, make long, hard journeys and begin new lives somewhere else. Is that why Moshi says the Irish story was their story? Is it possible for the two worlds to be similar?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

If you could help Moshi explain to Choona about the Great Irish Famine, what would you say? Remember that Moshi and Choona would use storytelling to communicate, not writing. Write your explanation to Choona in the form of a story.

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity teaches students the basic background of the Great Irish Famine and introduces the concept of the diaspora: people forced to leave their native place for political or economic reasons. Do students know anyone who came to the United States from a different country? What do they know about the immigrant's experience? Why do people come to America? The Irish were in America before the Great Irish Famine, but many more came during the famine. Why?

Teachers may want to consult other activities that use the potato as a means of discussing history and health.

(See *Clusters of Activities* listed in the beginning of this curriculum.)

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Teachers may want to use this activity to introduce storytelling skills. Have students practice telling their stories to Choona.

Students may want to find out more about Celts and American Indians Together (CAIT), a bi-national fund raising campaign founded to raise $1.7 million for world famine relief. By raising $1.7 million, the group will complete the circle of giving begun in 1847 by the Choctaw's donation of $170. The address is:

CAIT Inc.
C/O Iona College, Choctaw Suite
715 North Avenue
New Rochelle, New York 10801

Students may wish to write to Gary White Deer personally at CAIT (see above). He is the Director, Keepers of the Treasures, and co-founded CAIT to keep alive the story and message of *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.*

The Long March: Choona of the Choctaw

BACKGROUND

This activity (and five others) is based on the book *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick (see Additional Readings). The other activities are also titled *The Long March* and address the true story of the impoverished Choctaw Native Americans' contribution of $170, sent to Ireland in 1847. The story encourages students to think about what individuals can do to alleviate suffering around the world. In *The Long March,* the ancient tribal values of the Choctaw help the main character, Choona, to resolve this and other challenging questions.

In this activity, students develop awareness of the rigors of the Long March of the Choctaw Nation.

RESOURCES

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Detailed maps of the United States (see Learning Experiences 2 and 3.)

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Fitzpatrick, Marie-Louise. *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.* Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 1998.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the distance of the Long March and the difficulties of the trip.

Compare personal *long trips* with the Long March of the Choctaw nation.

STANDARDS

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

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

Locate places within the local community, state, and nation.

Map information about people, places, and environments.

Understand how to develop and use maps and other graphic representations to display geographic issues, problems, and questions.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- gather information
- ask and answer logical questions
- apply information gathered in discussion
- record data

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Prior to this activity read *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.*

1. Choona knew that Moshi meant that the famine for the Irish was like the Long March of the Choctaw people. He knew his people once lived in Mississippi, and that they were forced to leave their homes and to go to new lands in Oklahoma that the white people called Indian Territory. The Choctaw's long march was 500 miles. It was a very long trip. Ask students about their longest trips. How far did they travel on their longest trips? Why did they make their trips? If they went as far as 500 miles, did they travel by car, by bus, by train or by plane?
2. Trace the Choctaws' long march from near Philadelphia, Winston County, Mississippi, to Oklahoma just across the river from Ft. Smith, Arkansas. (In her author's notes, Fitzpatrick tells her reader that the name Oklahoma [Okla Homa] is Choctaw for Red People.) What direction did they travel? What entire state did they have to pass through to get from Mississippi to Oklahoma? What was the largest river that they had to cross? Were there mountains along the way? Which ones?
3. Ask students: How would you travel from Philadelphia, Mississippi, to Fort Smith on the Arkansas/Oklahoma border? Remember that your party includes children and old people. How far could you travel each day if you were walking? How long would it take to make the journey to Fort Smith?
4. Choona never asked questions about the long march. Grownups never discussed it with them. Ask students: Why do you think that the parents did not tell the children about the long march? What could have happened that made parents hesitate to share the story with their children? What kind of experience was it?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Write a story about the longest trip you have ever taken. Remember that a trip to a nearby destination could still be considered *long* if it was difficult. For example, what about a walk to a store that goes by an unfriendly dog? What about a walk made by someone who is trying not to use crutches? What about a walk to apologize to a neighbor for throwing a ball through their window? Sometimes these *short walks* can feel very, very long!

TEACHER REFLECTION

This is an opportunity for students to talk with parents about family travels, even if it is a bus or subway ride to visit a relative. Students will consider different rates of travel. How fast can they go in one hour of walking? Riding a bike? Traveling by plane? What other differences are there between different forms of transportation?

The Long March: Choona Learns of the Long March

BACKGROUND

This activity (and five others) is based on the book *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick (see Additional Readings). The other activities are also titled *The Long March* and address the true story of the impoverished Choctaw Native Americans' contribution of $170, sent to Ireland in 1847. The story encourages students to think about what individuals can do to alleviate suffering around the world. In *The Long March,* the ancient tribal values of the Choctaw help the main character, Choona, to resolve this and other challenging questions.

In this activity, the students discuss the book in detail, looking at the story from the perspective of storyteller Rock Woman.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Chief of the Choctaw Inc.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Fitzpatrick, Marie-Louise. *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.* Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 1998.

Harrell, Beatrice. *Longwalker's Journey.* New York: Penguin, 1999.

Lepthien, Emilie. *The Choctow*. Danbury, CT: Children's Press, 1992.

Plummer, William. "Chief of Choctaw Inc.," *People*, October. 4, 1999, 91-92, 94.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the Choctaw tribe's Long March.

Describe how the Choctaws empathized with the Irish during the famine.

Learn about the history of the Choctaw tribe by studying their folk narratives.

Describe the migratory path of the Choctaw during their Long March.

STANDARDS

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.

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, 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.

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

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Understand the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, scientific, technological, 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.

Map information about people, places, and environments.

Present information clearly in a variety of oral and written forms such as summaries, paraphrases, brief reports, stories, posters, and charts.

Recognize different levels of meaning.

Present personal responses to literature that make reference to the plot, characters, ideas, vocabulary, and text structure.

Produce interpretations of literary works that identify different levels of meaning and comment on their significance and effect.

Express opinions (in such forms as oral and written reviews, letters to the editor, essays, or persuasive speeches) about events, books, issues, and experiences, supporting their opinions with some evidence.

Listen for understanding.

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

- observe and conclude
- inquire, question, probe
- interpret information
- reflect upon content/form opinions
- connect concepts and themes

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCE

1. Explain to students that stories about the beginning of the world or the early times of a people are called *myths*. People who tell myths about their cultures believe the stories are true and pass them down to the younger generation. Choona's great-grandmother, Rock Woman, tells a very old story about the Choctaw people. Why does Rock Woman tell the story about "Nanih Waiyha?" (She says, "Long ago, when the world was young, the ground split open and the Choctaw walked out of the earth into the living land. They called the place where the earth opened *Nanih Waiyha* [Productive Mountain], and they treated the land as their mother. They said they would always live there, because if they left that place, they would be lost.") There is a photograph of Nanih Waiyha in Emilie Lapthien's *The Choctawa*.
2. Rock Woman tells about the history of their dealing with the Nahullo, the Europeans who came to Mississippi. For a time they shared land peacefully, but the Nahullo were not satisfied until all of the Choctaw land was taken. The Choctaws, who knew they would be lost if they left Nanih Waiyha, had to leave and go west to Indian Territory. How did the Nahullo get more land? What was the difference between the way the Choctaw and the Nahullo thought about land ownership? What do you think of when you hear the name Dancing Rabbit Creek? Can you make up a story about how the creek got its name? Can you draw a picture to go with your story? What place names do you know that are descriptive or that tell a story? Can you draw pictures of these place's names?

3. Rock Woman continues quietly to tell her story. All watch her without a sound. "We packed our belongings, all we could carry. We had to leave many things behind us." On the news, have you ever seen people having to leave their homes because of storms or floods or war? They often can take only what they can carry. If you had to leave your house and could take only a backpack, what would you take?
4. One of the things the Choctaw had to leave behind was Nanih Waiyha, their Creation Mound, their sacred site in Winston County, Mississippi. Why would they want to be near their sacred site? Do you know any other sacred sites? Jerusalem, Rome, and Mecca are sites associated with religion. There are also sacred sites associated with the history of a people: battlefields like Gettysburg or monuments like the Lincoln Memorial, the Vietnam Memorial, or the Statue of Liberty. There has been controversy about building a monument to WWII Veterans so that it changes the current layout of the Washington and Lincoln Monuments and the Reflection Pool in Washington, DC. What is the current status of this debate? Why is it so emotional for some people? What do students think?
5. Look at the journey that was mapped between Philadelphia, Mississippi, and Oklahoma near Ft. Smith. How far did Rock Woman and her people walk? Rock Woman describes walking in line stretched out for miles and sleeping on the ground at night. The government promised supplies (food and blankets), but it broke the promise and the supplies never came. It was winter and many people died of the cold. The Choctaw buried their dead in the sky, in the forks of trees where they believed they would return to their ancestors.
6. Rock Woman continues her story of the Long March, the march that took half of the Choctaw party: the old people and the children. Why was the Long March so hard on those two groups?
7. Even those who arrived in Oklahoma continued to suffer. Rock Woman says, "We have walked in circles ever since. We have built new homes but the land is foreign to us. We are lost just as our ancestors said we would be." Why does Rock Woman believe that her people are lost? Rock Woman told Choona that their people "...chose to be free rather than to live as strangers in our own land." Which would you have chosen? Would you have stayed in a familiar place if it meant losing your freedom or would you have chosen the Long March? Why does Rock Woman say "The Long March had never ended?" Rock Woman said it was a mistake not to talk about the Long March. "The mistake we have made is keeping our pain to ourselves." Often, when something very bad happens to a people, they choose not to talk about it. Sometimes it takes many, many years. Why do people choose silence? Is silence a good idea or should people talk about terrible experiences like slavery, the Great Irish Famine or the European Holocaust? How should we talk about such experiences?
8. Why was Choona upset when he heard the story of the Long March? Do you agree with him that the Choctaw should have refused to go and have fought to stay in Mississippi? What do you think would have happened?
9. What happens when Choona finds out he had a brother? What does he mean when he says that knowledge "changed everything"? What does his discovery that he had a brother have to do with his decision to agree to send money to Ireland?
10. Discuss the current status of the Choctaw, described in the handout *Chief of the Choctaw Inc*. as "one of the most successful tribes in the U.S."

Text source: Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick, *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.* Berkeley: The Tricycle Press, 1988. Reprinted by permission of the Tricycle Press and Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Why do you think the Choctaw decided to help the Irish?

TEACHER REFLECTION

This is an activity about developing empathy. Teachers may wish to discuss homelessness today and encourage students to develop a sensitivity to those enduring their own long marches.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Where do members of the Choctaw nation live today? On a map of the United States, identify the lands of the Choctaw nation. How do they use their tribal lands today? Is there a difference between the Choctaws of Mississippi and the Choctaws of Oklahoma? How has the geography affected the people who stayed on the Mississippi land and those who made the long march to Oklahoma?

Ask students to discuss oral traditions of their own families.

"The only way you can accomplish anything is by taking calculated risks," says Martin (on the reservation in Philadelphia, Miss.).

Chief of Choctaw Inc.

Phillip Martin has transformed his tribe from a poor cousin to a rich uncle

When Phillip Martin gets up in the morning, he cannot help but see the Silver Star Resort and Casino, a neon-lit apparition looming right across the street from the small brick home he built 35 years ago. Far from feeling assaulted, Martin is delighted by the 3,100-machine gaming establishment and 500-room hotel. "I can walk out into my front yard," he says with satisfaction, "and see if the parking lot is full."

Martin, 73, is the longtime chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, one of the most successful tribes in the U.S. And while the casino is not the sole vehicle of the 8,300-member tribe's remarkable ascendancy, it is a bright star in the Choctaws' financial firmament. During Martin's 40 years as tribal leader, his people have risen from abject poverty to become the envy

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES MCGOON

COURTESY PHILLIP MARTIN

A stint in the Army helped Martin "learn to compete and to get along with people."

M.R. HARRINGTON

People were "very destitute," says Martin, who grew up in a shack like this one (ca. 1910).

of their non-Indian neighbors.

The Mississippi Choctaws are an economic machine, making everything from greeting cards to automotive wire harnesses to plastic utensils for McDonald's. Four decades ago, about 80 percent of the tribe was unemployed; today anyone on the 25,500-acre reservation who wants a job can have one. Last year the tribe even opened a factory in Mexico, leading one official to joke, "We're running out of Indians."

The barrel-chested Martin gladly gives his visitor the tour in his tribal-issued silver Lincoln Town Car. He points to the elementary school built in 1990 and bulging with 500 kids. Next comes the wastewater treatment plant, which the Choctaws built without federal funding (Martin has little patience with red tape). "Four-point-five million we put in that one," he says. Along the road are small, neatly kept houses erected years ago with HUD money. Many have satellite dishes. Then he turns into a new subdivision of 30 three- and four-bedroom homes. "We call this one River Oaks," says Martin. "Other tribes come through here, and they say, 'How can you build these houses?'" He chuckles. "I say, 'It just takes a little money, is all.'"

Martin grew up on the reservation in a day when few Choctaws had running water or electricity, much less disposable cash. His father, Willie, who died when Phillip was 11, worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs as a janitor. His late mother, Mary, was a homemaker with five sons and a daughter. Subjected to the same Jim Crow racism as blacks, Choctaws were expected to clear the sidewalks when whites approached. The jobs, says Martin, "were all menial, if you got one." In 1939, at age 13, Phillip went to a BIA boarding school, where he was placed in fourth grade, the only Choctaw among Cherokees. Still, he graduated from high school at 18.

Teachers like Shirley Benn are preparing Choctaw kids for the information age.

Drafted into the U.S. Army Air Forces at the end of World War II, he joined the Allied forces in Europe and was amazed by the devastation. For the first time, he says, he realized white people could have it as bad as Indians. Later, in Munich, he saw Germans sifting the ruins for reusable bricks and was struck that, "even in their defeated condition," they were determined to rebuild their lives. He wondered if his people might do the same.

Leaving the military as a staff sergeant in 1955, he married Bonnie Bell, now 68, who worked for the local BIA. (The couple have two daughters, Deborah, 43, and Patri-

cia, 42; both work in the Choctaw school system.) Phillip had technical skills—he had been a radar specialist—but he could not find a decent job. "They told me, 'You don't have any experience,'" he says. Using the G.I. Bill, he went to school to learn to be an electrician but still couldn't get enough work. In 1961 he finally landed a maintenance job at nearby Meridian Naval Air Station.

In 1957 he won a seat on the tribal council. In 1959 he became chairman. But the council was then controlled by the local BIA. When Martin wanted to make contacts in Washington, D.C., the BIA superintendent took a group in an agency car and introduced them to select congressmen. Martin felt patronized. "We came back," he says, "and I told the guys, 'I've been all over the *damn* world. I *know* how to get to Washington and back.' From then on, we didn't tell anybody. We just got in the car and went."

Exercising a newfound independence, Martin and other tribal leaders cultivated powerful pols (among them the late Mississippi Sen. John Stennis) and secured federal funding for a high school, hospital, roads and housing on the reservation. By 1969 they had also secured funds from a local bond issue to build a 30-acre industrial park. In 1978, the Packard Electric division of General Motors asked the tribe to manufacture wire harnesses for cars and trucks. The plant opened in '79, but was soon on the verge of bankruptcy. Recruited by Martin, mid-level Packard executive Lester Dalme instituted management reforms that had the enterprise turning a profit within a month.

"Bottom line, the chief took a chance on me," says Dalme, 53, who still runs the operation. "There was something about the charisma of this guy. He wanted to do something for his people. He had this vision—and he pulled you in with it."

Soon the Choctaws were making cards for the American Greetings Corporation and car speakers for Chrysler and running their own direct-mail business. "When we started, the goal was to create jobs," says Dalme—and break the cycle of dependency. The new goal is upgrading employees' skills. To this end, the tribe will pay full freight for anyone who wants to go to college.

Withal, Martin's commitment to the Choctaws has come at a personal price. "I always say I don't know what a vacation is like," says Bonnie, "because I've never had one."

She is not likely to get one anytime soon. Martin talks animatedly about a new casino, about the new, PGA-quality Dancing Rabbit Golf Club, about how he wants to create more doctors and lawyers. "When you see something growing, like some flower out there," he says of his people, "you've got to keep it nurtured, keep it watered."

"He's the chief," Dalme says simply. "And Lord help the next guy."

• **William Plummer**
• **Michael Haederle** in Philadelphia, Miss.

"He's done so much," says Patricia of father Martin (with great-granddaughter Mahalia, 3, left, and grandkids Sonny, 4, and Winter, 9).

Source: William Plummer. "Chief of the Choctaw Inc." Photographs by James McGoon. *People Weekly*, October 4, 1999. pp. 91, 92, 94. Used with permission of William Plummer, Michael Haederle. *People Weekly* © 1999 All rights reserved Time Inc.

The Long March: Creating Murals

BACKGROUND

This activity (and five others) is based on the book *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick (see Additional Readings). The other activities are also titled *The Long March* and address the true story of the impoverished Choctaw Native Americans' contribution of $170, sent to Ireland in 1847. The story encourages students to think about what individuals can do to alleviate suffering around the world. In *The Long March,* the ancient tribal values of the Choctaw help the main character, Choona, to resolve this and other challenging questions.

This activity gives students the opportunity to depict the Long March and Irish emigration in mural form.

RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Bain, George. *Celtic Art: The Methods of Construction*. New York: Dover, 1973 [1951].

Canady, John. *What is Art?* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983.

Davis, Courtney. *The Celtic Art Source Book*. London: Blanford Press, 1988.

Fitzpatrick, Marie-Louise. *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.* Berkeley: Tricycle Press, 1998.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

rolls of mural paper

paints, markers

pictures of the Diego Rivera paintings in Mexico City

pictures of murals in urban areas, on bridges, buildings, etc. (e.g., Albany, NY, has several murals around the city.)

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Create murals of the Choctaw Long Walk and the Irish journey to the United States at the time of the Great Irish Famine.

Create murals that reflect Choctaw and Irish cultural influences.

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. (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.

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

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

Create art works that show the influence of a particular culture.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- develop analytical thinking
- reflective thinking
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- present information
- interpret information
- identify patterns and themes

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Prior to this activity read *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief.*

1. Muralists do their paintings on walls rather than on canvas. Sometimes artists paint their murals on canvas and then attach the canvas to the wall. Murals are two-dimensional, not three-dimensional. What does that mean? There is no perspective, so line, shape and color are the elements of a mural.
2. Students can work in two groups to create murals of the journeys of the Irish to the United States and of the Choctaws from Mississippi to Oklahoma. What images should be included? Students might consider incorporating the symbols from the Author's Notes page of *The Long March: The Choctaw's Gift to Irish Famine Relief* in their Choctaw mural and Celtic motifs in their Irish immigration mural. Ask students to describe murals they have seen, including paintings on buildings, bridges, ceilings, etc.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Student work should be assessed on understanding of the concepts and of elements in a mural: line, shape, color, their use of cultural forms and symbols, and the execution of their concept. Since this is a group project, students should be evaluated on their ability to work with others to create a work of art and to portray a theme.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Discuss the basic motifs in murals with a diaspora theme and encourage students to think about how Choctaw and Celtic forms and symbols represent their culture's diaspora experience.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

Write corresponding paragraphs that describe the events depicted in the mural.

Why Was There a Famine in the 1840s?

BACKGROUND

The cause of the Great Irish Famine has been debated by political activists and historians from the 1850s to the present day. The most highly contentious political debate is whether the British government consciously pursued genocidal policies designed to depopulate Ireland by death and emigration. The Great Irish Famine has been the source of nationalist anger, it has been an historical problem to be studied critically and demythologized, and it has been a reminder of the realities of hunger and poverty in the contemporary world. Former President of the Republic of Ireland Mary Robinson argues that reflection on the Great Irish Famine should prompt action to prevent similar catastrophes.

One way to approach the political debates is to explore the difference between the goals of political activists and historians. The primary concern of activists is to win support for their political positions in the effort to bring about political, social and economic changes in society. While historians also have political views and goals, their professional commitment requires that they examine events from multiple perspectives and that they hold themselves to a more objective standard when they draw conclusions based on evidence.

As students read excerpts from primary source documents and interpretations of the causes of the Great Irish Famine and the reasons for British policies, discuss with them the need to consider the following questions: Is this commentator writing as a political activist or as an historian? What is his/her point of view about the Great Irish Famine and other events in Irish history? Does his/her point of view aid in their examination of events or interfere with their analysis? Could the argument be made more effectively? Is it possible for someone to be impartial when researching and writing about a topic like the Great Irish Famine?

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Explanations for the Famine (2 versions for differentiated instruction)

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Engels, Friedrich. *Conditions of the Working Class in England.* London: Swan Sannenschien, 1892.

Heilbroner, Robert. *The Worldly Philosophers*. New York: Simon and Shuster, 1967.

Malthus, Thomas Robert. *Essay on the Principle of Population as it Affects the Future Improvements of Society.* London: 1798.

Mitchel, John. *The Last Conquest of Ireland.* Dublin: The Irishman Office, 1861.

Newman, E. *Notes on Irish Natural History. (*1840).

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Explain the causes of the Great Irish Famine as viewed from different perspectives.

Describe the origins of various points of view when conducting historical analysis.

Compare the differences between political activists and historians in interpreting content.

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

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.

Explain the importance of analyzing narratives drawn from different times and places to understand historical events.

Identify historical problems, pose analytical questions or hypotheses, research analytical questions or test hypotheses, formulate conclusions or generalizations, raise new questions or issues for further investigation.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- evaluate and connect evidence
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- identify premises and rationale for points of view
- probe assumptions for accuracy and viewpoints
- interpret information and data
- question arguments
- consult and interpret primary sources

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students if they have seen a political debate on television. Have they taken part in a family discussion about an issue raised at the dinner table? Have they observed a heated discussion between two people involved in a traffic accident? How do they pick sides? How do they decide who is telling the truth? Can there be more than one truth? What criteria do students use to make their decisions?
2. Ask students to read the first in Section 1 of the handout *Explanations for the Famine*. They will write their explanations of the main idea of each quotation. According to the writers, what does the potato have to do with Irish character? Do these statements offer an accurate reason for the Great Irish Famine?
3. Now working in partners or in groups, ask students to read Section 2 and write their explanation of the quote. Mitchel refers to the "...sack of Magdeburg" and the "ravage of the Palatinate." Mitchel compares the Great Irish Famine to the destruction of the Protestant stronghold of Magdeburg in 1631 and the devastation of the Palatinate regions of Germany during the Thirty Years War (1618-48), a religious war which turned into a war for the political control of Europe. Is there a reason why Mitchel compares the Great Irish Famine to a religious war, or is he simply talking about the human capacity for the wholesale destruction of a place or a people?
4. Ask students to read Section 3 and write their explanation of Malthus's quote about the famine and the natural law. What do we call it when something that is not human is given human attributes? According to Malthus, what is the relationship between excess population and famine? Is his view an accurate explanation of why there was a famine in Ireland in the 1840s?

5. Ask students to read Section 4 and write their explanations of Engel's quote about what led to the conditions that brought the Great Irish Famine to Ireland in the 1840s. For Engels, the problem was the competition for land, competition that resulted in small subdivisions and undercapitalization of agriculture that would make the occupants of the land vulnerable in an economic crisis.
6. Ask students to discuss their explanations with other class members and the class will decide which of the statement or statements come closest to their understanding of the causes that led to the Great Irish Famine.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Ask students: When there are multiple explanations for an historical event, how do you decide which side to take? What criteria can be used to evaluate arguments? Write an essay describing how you came to your interpretation of the causes of the Great Irish Famine.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Teachers may find it helpful to do this activity after students have studied about conditions in Ireland before the Great Irish Famine, including the activity *Views of Economists,* which includes a discussion of Malthus and Engels.

Teachers may want to move from this activity into a broader discussion of the issues today that generate sharp disagreement and different points of view. What are some of those current issues? What criteria do students use to decide which positions they will take?

Explanations For the Famine

1. The cause was the "flawed character" of the Irish.

"The poorer Irish appear to me the most easily contented, and the most philosophically and truly happy of any peasantry I have ever seen; faithful, generous, warm-hearted, fearless and reckless, they smile in peace over a handful of bad potatoes, and devoutly thank the Providence who provides it."

E. Newman. *Notes on Irish Natural History* (1840).

"The poor were the architects of their own misery. No other crop produces such an abundance of food on the same extent of ground, requires so little skill and labour either to rear it or prepare it for food, and leaves so large a portion of the labourer's time unoccupied. Now, these are great temptations, and it requires forethought and energy to overcome them. When they go to England or America, they earn their subsistence. It no longer depends on the potato, the crop which fosters, from the earliest childhood, habits of indolence, improvidence and waste."

The Plough (1846).

2. The cause was British colonial policy in Ireland.

"No sack of Magdeburg, or ravage of the Palatinate ever approached the horror and dislocation to the slaughters done in Ireland by mere official red tape and stationery, and the principles of political economy.... The Almighty sent the potato blight, but the English created the famine."

John Mitchel. *The Last Conquest of Ireland.*

3. The cause was economic and natural law.

"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."

Thomas Robert Malthus. *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798).

4. The cause was intense competition for a limited resource, land.

"It has been asserted that the relation of the tenant to the landlord is to blame for all this poverty. 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) the cause of this poverty lies in the existing social conditions. With the small subdivisions of the land, especially in the competition here found in the form of the subdivision of the soil, an improvement of the soil by the investment of capital was not to be thought of."

Friedrich Engels. *Condition of the Working Class in England.*

Explanations For the Famine

1. The cause was the "flawed character" of the Irish.

The poorer Irish are the most easily contented and the most truly happy of any peasantry I have ever seen. They are faithful, generous, warm-hearted, fearless and reckless. They smile in peace over a handful of bad potatoes and devoutly thank God who provides it.

E. Newman. *Notes on Irish Natural History* (1840).

The Irish poor are the cause of their own misery. The potato crop encourages, from childhood, habits of laziness, negligence, and waste. No other crop produces such an abundance of food on the same amount of ground, requires so little skill and labor, and leaves so large a portion of the laborer's time unoccupied, as the potato. These are great temptations. It requires thought and energy to overcome them. When the Irish go to England or America, they earn their keep.

The Plough (1846).

2. The cause was British colonial policy in Ireland.

No destruction of a city or attack on a castle ever approached the horror and dislocation to the slaughters done in Ireland by government policies and the principles of political economy. The Almighty sent the potato blight, but the English created the famine.

John Mitchel. *The Last Conquest of Ireland.*

3. The cause was economic and natural law.

Famine seems to be the last, the most dreadful resource of nature. The power of population growth is much greater then to the power of the earth to provide all people with enough food to survive. Because of this, premature death must visit the human race. The vices of mankind are active contributors to depopulation. They come before the great army of destruction and often complete the dreadful work. But if human vices fail in this war of extermination, 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.

Thomas Robert Malthus. *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798).

4. The cause was intense competition for a limited resource, land.

The cause of poverty in Ireland lies in the existing social conditions. The land is divided into small units for rental. This causes sharp competition between tenant farmers. It prevents farmers from investing in improving their farms.

Friedrich Engels. *Condition of the Working Class in England.*

Edited for purposes of *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum*

Demographic Data and the Great Irish Famine

BACKGROUND

Study of the Great Irish Famine allows students to explore a number of essential social studies questions related to the causes of events, and the responsibility of the government to respond to the events. No one knows exactly how many people died in the Great Irish Famine of 1845-52, but there was a loss of over 1.6 million to famine-related death and emigration. Most deaths were caused by famine-related diseases: relapsing fever, typhus, dysentery, and cholera. The vulnerability of the poor to these diseases was exacerbated by hunger, inadequate shelter and sanitation, overcrowding in workhouses and hard labor on work relief projects. This human disaster occurred while Ireland was part of Great Britain, the most industrialized and advanced country in the world at the time.

This activity gives students the opportunity to analyze demographic data about the impact of the Great Irish Famine on life in Ireland.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Demographic Data Charts

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Edwards, R.D. and T.D. Williams. *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History, 1845-1852*. Dublin: Browne and Nolan, 1956.

Kennedy, Liam, Paul S. Ell, E.M. Crawford, and L.A. Clarkson. *Mapping the Great Irish Famine: A Survey of the Famine Decades*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999.

Kineally, Christine. *This Great Calamity.* Boulder, Co.: Roberts, Rinehart, 1995.

Kissane, Noel. *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History*. Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995, pp.30-31.

Litton, Helen. *The Irish Famine.* Dublin: Wolfhound, 1994.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Analyze data to better understand the statistics of the Great Irish Famine.

Analyze data to explain the causes and effects of the Great Irish Famine.

Create a chart of data and trends.

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.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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.

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

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

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- evaluate and connect evidence
- think rationally about content
- interpret information and data
- reflect upon content/form opinions
- consult and interpret primary sources
- identify patterns and themes

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Explain to students that sometimes an examination of a large amount of numerical information helps us to understand things about a society that we may not see when we look at individual cases. Ask students: In our society today how do we know how many people live here and who they are? How often does the government collect census information? How is information from congressional districts used? What are some of the possible uses of this information? What other kinds of data does the government collect?
2. Explain that charts help us organize a large amount of information, locate key data, find patterns in the data which we call trends, draw conclusions about changes in societies and think of new questions and issues we might explore. Ask students to examine the Population of Ireland, 1841-1871 Chart. What was the population of Ireland in 1841, before the Great Irish Famine? What happened to the population of Ireland between 1841 and 1851? Between 1851-1861? 1861-1871? What pattern or trend can students identify in the chart? Why do students think the trend continued after 1851, after the end of the Great Irish Famine? What other information do students need to really understand what caused the population to continue to decline after the Great Irish Famine?
3. Working in groups, ask students to identify key information and trends in another of the charts: Reported Deaths in Ireland, 1842-1852; Number of Families Evicted; Overseas Migration from Ireland, 1842-1855; and Migration to Liverpool, 1849-1853. Students can complete this chart on the board:

   Chart:

   Key Data:

   Trends:

   Conclusions:

   Questions:

   What conclusions can students draw from the different data and trends? What questions do students have about the data and the trends? What more would they like to know? What does the demographic data tell us about the impact of the Great Irish Famine on life in Ireland?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Some people argue that control of information is a powerful political tool. They want more laws that require government and business to make information available to the public. Is this a good idea? Explain your point of view.

TEACHER REFLECTION

When students work with the data in this activity, they will realize the importance of collecting and studying demographic information. This is an opportune time to talk about the kinds of demographic data that the United States government collects, particularly census data. Students might examine current census forms to see what kinds of data will be available to future social scientists. What do students think are the most important questions on the form? Are there any additional questions that students think should be asked? How will the information be used by the government? Teachers may want to use this activity with *Why Is It Important to be Counted*?

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Select a country in the world today other than the United States and assemble or create 5 to 10 charts and graphs that describe that country's economy. Using the chart format from this lesson, analyze their data and write reports describing the country's economic conditions.

Using software, students can create graphs of the material to help them focus on details, and visualize trends and changes.

Demographic Data Charts

Population of Ireland, 1841-1871

Source: Helen Litton (1994). *The Irish Famine*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, p. 8.

1841	8,175,000
1851	6,552,000
1861	5,799,000
1871	4,412,000

A) Reported Deaths in Ireland, 1843-1852

Source: Helen Litton (1994). *The Irish Famine*. Dublin: Wolfhound Press, p. 8.

1843	70,499
1844	75,055
1845	86,900
1846	122,899
1847	249,335
1848	208,252
1849	240,797
1850	164,093
1851	96,798
1852	80,112

B) Irish Grain Exports to Great Britain, 1800-1840 (in quarters)

Source: R. Edwards and T. Williams (1956). *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History, 1845-1852*. Dublin: Browne and Nolan.

Year	Wheat and Flour (qtrs)	Oats and Oatmeal (qtrs)
1800	749	2,411
1805	84,087	203,202
1810	126,388	492,741
1815	189,544	597,537
1820	403,407	916,251
1825	396,018	1,629,856
1830	529,717	1,471,252
1835	661,776	1,822,767
1840	174,439	2,037,835

C) Cattle, Sheep and Pig Exports from Ireland to England, 1846-1851

Source: R. Edwards and T. Williams (1956). *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History, 1845-1852*. Dublin: Browne and Nolan.

Year	Cattle	Sheep	Pigs
1846	186,483	259,257	480,827
1847	189,960	324,179	106,407
1848	196,042	255,682	110,787
1849	201,811	241,061	
1851			68,053

Control of the Land

D) Land Holding in Ireland by Size, 1841-1847

Source: R. Edwards and T. Williams (1956), *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History, 1845-1852*. Dublin: Browne and Nolan.

Size of Holding	1841	1847	Difference
less than 1 acre	not available	73,016	unknown
1-5 acres	310,375	139,041	-173,334
5-15 acres	252,778	269,534	+16,756
15-30 acres	79,338	164,337	+84,999
above 30 acres	48,623	157,097	+108,474

E) Changing Size and Number of Farms

Source: Mary E. Daly. (1986). *The Famine in Ireland*. Dundalk: Dublin Historical Associates. pp.66. Based on P.M.A. Bourke, "The Agricultural Statistics of the 1841 Census of Ireland: A critical Review," in Economic History Review, xviii, 2 (Aug 1965), pp. 376-391.

	1845	1851
1-5 acres	181,950	88,083
5-15 acres	311,138	191,854
15 plus acres	276,618	290,401
TOTAL	769,701	570,338

F) Landlords

Source: Tim P. O'Neill. "Famine Evictions," in Carla King, ed. *Famine, Land, and Culture in Ireland*. Dublin University College Dublin Press, 2000. pp. 40. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Families Evicted, 1846 – 1848

Year	Number of Families Served with Eviction Notices
1846	19,704
1847	51,232
1848	69,899
	Total Families 140,835
	Total Persons (estimated 5 persons per family) 704,175

Police reports of evictions from 1849 to 1854 showed 47,511 families were evicted. The total of those served with ejection notices and actually evicted (1846-1854) was 188,346 families evicted (or 974,930 persons based on an estimated 5 persons per family).

Survival

G) Overseas Migration from Ireland, 1842-1855

Source: R. Edwards and T. Williams (1956). *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History, 1845-1852*. Dublin: Browne and Nolan.

Year	U.S.	%	Canada	%	Australia	%
1842	49,000	55.9	39,000	44.0	1,000	1.1
1843	23,000	62.4	14,000	36.2	500	1.4
1844	37,000	68.6	16,000	30.4	500	1.0
1845	50,000	66.9	25,000	23.0		
1846	68,000	64.2	38,000	35.8		
1847	117,000	54.3	97,000	45.2		
1848	154,000	86.2	23,000	13.8	2,000	1.0
1849	177,000	82.4	31,000	14.3	7,000	3.3
1850	181,000	86.4	24,000	11.7	4,000	1.9
1851	216,000	86.3	29,000	11.8	5,000	1.9
1852	193,000	81.4	22,000	9.8	6,000	2.8
1853	157,000	81.5	22,000	11.6	13,000	6.6
1854	111,000	73.9	23,000	15.3	16,000	10.8
1855	57,000	72.4	6,000	7.9	16,000	19.6

H) Migration to Liverpool, 1849-1853

Source: Christine Kinealy (1995). *This Great Calamity*. Boulder, CO: Roberts, Rinehart.

Year	Total Migrants
1849	240,925
1850	251,001
1851	283,503
1852	232,331
1853	233,652

I) Relief Funds Raised in United States Cities, 1846-1847

Source: Christine Kinealy (1995). *This Great Calamity*. Boulder, CO: Roberts, Rinehart.

New York City	$170,150
Newark, New Jersey	$35,000
Boston	$45,000
Baltimore	$40,000
Philadelphia	$50,000
New Orleans	$25,000
Albany, New York	$25,000
Washington	$5,000
Total	$395,150

Causes of the Great Irish Famine

BACKGROUND

Central to the discussion of the Great Irish Famine is the question of its cause (or causes). This activity introduces students to the explanations that have been offered since the mid-nineteenth century. Carr's observations and Malthus's population theory were written before the Great Irish Famine; however, their points of view were revisited by those trying to make sense of the crisis.

It is important for students to realize that historians today continue to debate questions about the Great Irish Famine. The questions about causes and responses and the interpretations proposed continue to remind us that history is never simple. What is clear is that people died of hunger and famine-related disease in Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century and continue to die from those causes today. Students might think about these documents discussing causes as they confront the problems of hunger today. Are some of the causes the same? Are there new causes?

This activity can be used with *An Old Woman of the Roads, The Great Irish Famine: A Tragic Ecological Accident?* and *Why was There Famine in Ireland in the 1840s?* Students can also use the essays found in the beginning of this curriculum as valuable resources.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

What Were the Principle Causes of the Great Irish Famine?

ADDITIONAL READINGS

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

Kinealy, Christine. *The Great Calamity*. Boulder, CO: Robert Rinehart, 1995.

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

O'Gráda, Cormac. *The Great Irish Famine*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1989.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the various explanations for the cause of the Great Irish Famine.

Create letters presenting point of view and recommendations regarding causes of 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.

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

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

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

Interpret and analyze complex informational texts and presentations from reference books and primary source materials in their subject area courses.

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

Establish an authoritative stance on the subject and provide references to establish the validity and verifiability of the information presented.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- gather information
- interpret information
- synthesize information
- reflect upon content
- question arguments
- make generalizations
- draw conclusions

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Read the following paragraph to the students and then list the causes on the board (asking them to repeat what they heard).

There is widespread historical debate over the principle causes of the mid-nineteenth century Great Irish Famine. Blame has been placed on the failure of the potato crop four times in five years, on Divine Providence (God's will), on economic and natural laws, on overpopulation, on a flaw in the character of the Irish people, on greedy, absentee landlords, on the delayed and inadequate response of the British government, and on English racism.

Ask students to read the handout *What Were the Principle Causes of the Great Irish Famine?* and list the main ideas in each document.

Students should then select five documents from at least three different sections, discuss the main ideas in each document and explain why the author believes his cause is the principle cause of the Great Irish Famine.

Writing as an Irish Member of Parliament to the Prime Minister, ask students to recommend two measures that the government should take to prevent impending disaster or the continuing famine crisis.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Discuss at least three of the proposed principle causes of the Great Irish Famine and the part each cause played in the complex issues that led to the crisis. Place the causes in the order of importance that you decide is appropriate, and support your choices with references to specific documents.

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity asks students to make judgments about historical evidence. They need to understand the texts, list the main ideas of each text, summarize the writer's argument and then evaluate that writer's argument in the context of other arguments and of what students have learned about the Great Irish Famine.

For students who need more support doing this activity, it is suggested that students work in pairs, in teams, or as a class to compare notes about the main ideas of documents and the writers' arguments in each passage, before students make their own judgments about the causes of the Great Irish Famine.

This activity offers students the opportunity to evaluate their strengths as historians. What kinds of historical evidence do they find most accessible? What kinds of evidence are most challenging to interpret? This is a chance to make an inventory of their social studies skills.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Students can graph the data.

What Were the Principle Causes of the Mid-Nineteenth Century Great Irish Famine?

Section A: Ireland's Dependence on the Potato

Document A) 1. "The Irish consumption of potatoes was extraordinary by modern standards. An estimated seven million tons of potatoes were required each year to feed the population of Ireland in the 1840's. Adult male workers ate up to fourteen pounds of potatoes daily. Women and children over ten years of age ate about eleven pounds daily. Younger children consumed about five pounds. The potatoes were eaten in three meals a day. They were seasoned with salt, cabbage, and fish when available. Irish dependence on the potato as a source of food eventually led to disaster. In 1845, a devastating disease struck the Irish potato crop. It was a fungus that caused fields of potatoes to wither and rot. As a result of the potato blight, one million people died and another one million to two million Irishmen and women left their homeland to avoid starvation."

Source: *The Spectator*, October 25, 1845.

Section B: The Cause was Divine Providence

Document B) 1. "Divine Providence, in its inscrutable ways, has again poured out upon us the vial of its wrath. A blast ... has passed over the land, and the hopes of the poor potato cultivators are totally blighted, and the food of a whole nation has perished … In many places the wretched people were seated on the fences of their decaying gardens, wringing their hands and wailing bitterly the destruction that had left them foodless."

Source: William Steuart Trench. August 6, 1846.

Section C: Economic and Natural Law

Document C) 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 might blow levels the population with the food of the world."

Source: Thomas Robert Malthus. *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798).

Document C) 2. "The cause of this poverty lies in the existing social conditions, … With the small subdivisions of the land, especially in the competition here found in the form of the subdivision of the soil … an improvement of the soil by the investment of capital was not to be thought of."

Source: F. Engels. *Condition of the Working Class in England.*

Section D: Economic and Natural Law

Document D) 1. "The 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."

Document D) 2. "Since the fatal days of the potato famine and the cholera, the annual number of emigrants have gone on increasing until they have become so great as to suggest the idea, and almost justify the belief, of a gradual depopulation of Ireland."

Source: *The Illustrated London News*, July 6, 1850.

Section E: The Problem was the Character of the Irish

Document E) 1. "The poorer Irish appear to me the most easily contented, and the most philosophically and truly happy of any peasantry I have ever seen; faithful, generous, warm-hearted, fearless and reckless, they smile in peace over a handful of bad potatoes, and devoutly thank the Providence who provides it."

Source: E. Newman. *Notes on Irish Natural History* (1840).

Document E) 2. "The poor were the architects of their own misery. No other crop produces such an abundance of food on the same extent of ground, requires so little skill and labor either to rear it or prepare it for food, and leaves so large a portion of the laborer's time unoccupied. Now, these are great temptations, and it requires forethought and energy to overcome them. When they go to England or America, they earn their subsistence. It no longer depends on the potato, the crop which fosters from the earliest childhood, habits of indolence, improvidence and waste."

Source: *The Plough* (1846).

Document E) 3. Insufficiency of provision, which operates so powerfully against marriage in England, is not known or cared about in Ireland; there the want of an establishment never affects the brain of the enamored rustic. Love lingers only until he can find out a dry bank, pick a few sticks, collect some furze and fern, knead a little mud with straw, and raise a hut about six feet high, with a door to let in the light and let out the smoke; these accomplished, the happy pair, united by their priest, enter their sylvan dwelling, and a rapid race of chubby boys and girls soon proves by what scanty means life can be sustained and imparted.

Source: *The London Times*, September 22, 1846.

Section F: Landlords

Document F) 1. Families Evicted, 1846 – 1854

Year	Number of Families Served with Eviction Notices
1846	19,704
1847	51,232
1848	69,899
	Total Families 140,835
	Total Persons (estimated 5 persons per family) 704,175

Police reports of evictions from 1849 to 1854 showed 47,511 families were evicted. The total of those served with evictions notices and actually evicted (1846-1854) was 188,346 families or 974,930 persons (an estimated 5 persons per family).

Source: Tim P. O'Neill. "Famine Evictions," in Carla King, ed. *Famine, Land, and Culture in Ireland*. Dublin University College Dublin Press, 2000. pp. 40. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Document F) 1. Eviction Picture

'The ejectment'. (*The Illustrated London News*, 16 Dec. 1848.)

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.

Section G: Defense of British Policy

Document G) 1. "(The British government should) take advantage of this calamity for introducing among the people of Ireland the taste for a better and more certain provision for their support … and thereby diminishing the chances to which they will be constantly liable, of recurrences of this great and mysterious visitation."

Source: British Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel. November 1845.

Document G) 2. "That indirect permanent advantages will accrue to Ireland from the scarcity, and the measures taken for its relief, I entertain no doubt … Besides, the greatest improvement of all which could take place in Ireland would be to teach the people to depend upon themselves for developing the resources of the county, instead of having recourse to the assistance of the government on every occasion … if a firm stand is not made against the prevailing disposition to take advantage of this crisis to break down all barriers, the true permanent interests of this country will, I am convinced, suffer in a manner which will be irreparable in our time."

Source: C. Trevelyan. February 1846.

Section H: Opposition to British Policy

Document H) 1. "Perhaps in no instance does the oppression of the poor come before the mind so vividly, as when going over the places made desolate by the famine, to see the tumbled cabins, with the poor, hapless inmates, lingering and sometimes wailing in despair, their ragged barefoot little ones clinging about them, one on the back of the weeping mother, and the father looking in silent despair, while apart some of them are scraping among the rubbish to gather some little relic."

Source: Asenath Nicholson, *Annals of the Famine in Ireland.*

Document H) 2. Livestock (Cattle, Calves, Sheep and Pigs) Exported from Ireland to England, 1846-1849.

Source: M.E. Daley (1986). *The Famine in Ireland*, pp. 57.

Year	Livestock Exported to England
1846	926,600
1847	620,600
1848	886,700
1849	617,200

Document H) 3. "Can we wonder if the Irish people believe that the lives of those who have perished have been sacrificed by a deliberate compact to the gains of English merchants and if this belief has created among all classes a feeling of deep dissatisfaction, not only with the ministry but with English rule. What can be more absurd, what can be more wicked, than for men professing attachment to an imperial Constitution to answer claims now put forward for state assistance to the unprecedented necessities of Ireland by talking of Ireland being a drain upon the English treasury? If Cornwall (England) had been visited with the scenes that have desolated Cork (Ireland), would similar arguments been used? Would men have stood up and denied that Cornwall was entitled to have the whole country share the extraordinary loss?

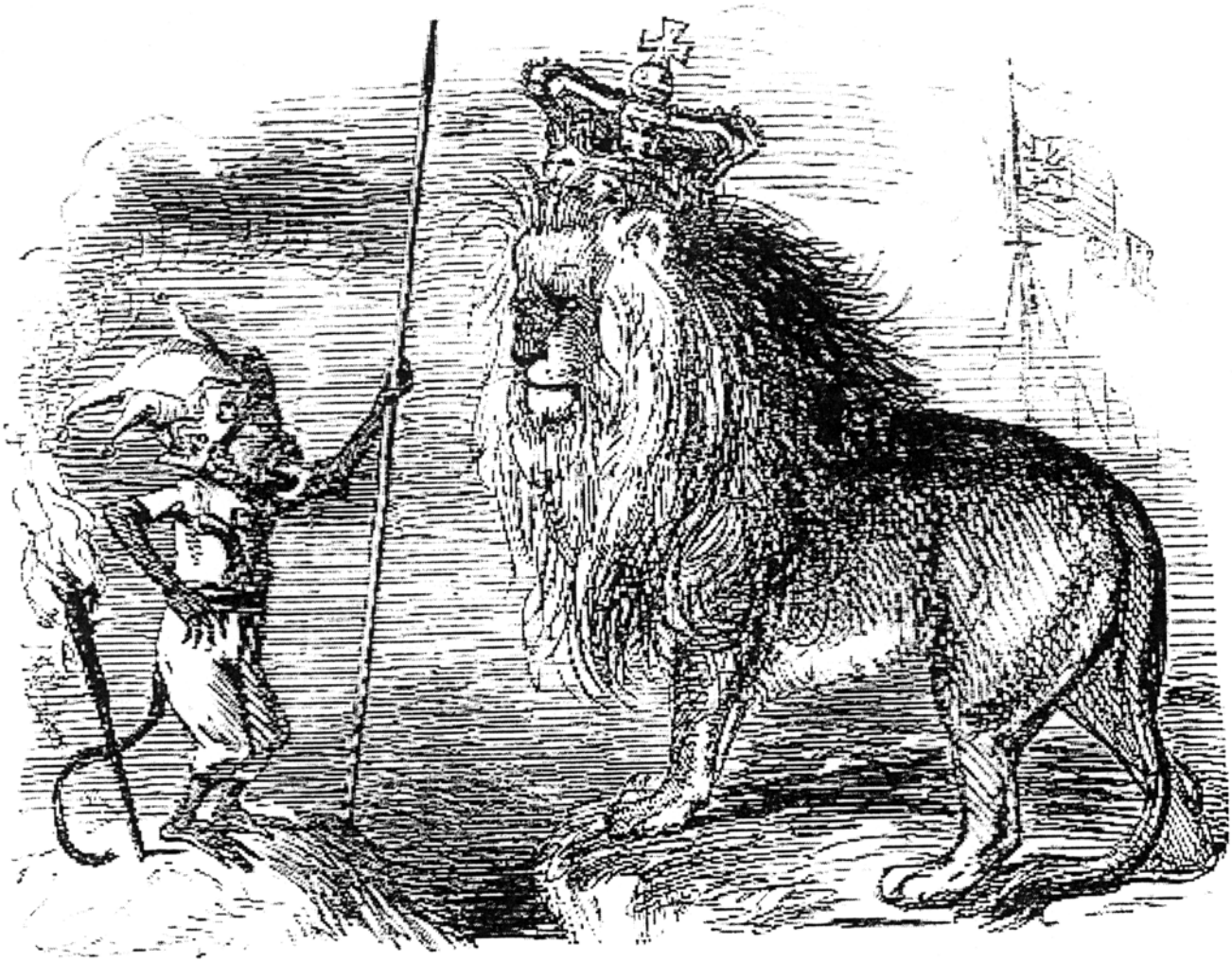
Source: Isaac Butt. "The Famine in the Land," *Dublin University Magazine*, XXIX, April 1847.

Document H) 4. "There began (in 1847) to be an eager desire in England to get rid of the Celts by emigration; for though they were perishing fast of hunger and typhus, they were not perishing fast enough.… No sack of Magdeburg, or ravage of the Palatinate ever approached the horror and dislocation to the slaughters done in Ireland by mere official red tape and stationery, and the principles of political economy.… The Almighty sent the potato blight, but the English created the famine."

Source: J.Mitchel. *The Last Conquest of Ireland*(1860).

Section I: English Racism

Document I) 1. *Punch Magazine*



THE BRITISH LION AND THE IRISH MONKEY.

Monkey (Mr. Mitchell). 'One of us MUST be Put Down.'"

This Cartoon, appearing April 8, 1848, was drawn by **John Leech**. The caption under the title reads:

Monkey (Mr Mitchell). "One of us MUST be 'Put Down.'"

Mr. Mitchell is John Mitchell, editor of the militant newspaper "The United irishman."

The British Lion and the Irish Monkey

What Were the Principle Causes of the Mid-Nineteenth Century Great Irish Famine?

The Cause was the "Flawed Character of the Irish."

The poorer Irish are the most easily contented and the most truly happy of any peasantry I have ever seen. They are faithful, generous, warm-hearted, fearless and reckless. They smile in peace over a handful of bad potatoes and devoutly thank God who provides it.

E. Newman. *Notes on Irish Natural History* (1840).

The Irish poor are the cause of their own misery. The potato crop encourages, from childhood, habits of laziness, negligence and waste. No other crop produces such an abundance of food on the same amount of ground, and requires so little skill and labor, and leaves so large a portion of the laborer's time unoccupied, as the potato. These are great temptations. It requires thought and energy to overcome them. When the Irish go to England or America, they earn their keep.

The Plough (1846).

2. The Cause was British Colonial Policy in Ireland.

No destruction of a city or attack on a castle even approached the horror and dislocation to the slaughters done in Ireland by government policies and the principles of political economy. The Almighty sent the potato blight, but the English created the famine.

John Mitchel. *The Last Conquest of Ireland.*

3. The Cause was Economic and Natural Law

Famine seems to be the last, the most dreadful resource of nature. The power of population growth is much greater than the power of the earth to provide all people with enough food to survive. Because of this, premature death must visit the human race. The vices of mankind are active contributors to depopulation. They come before the great army of destruction and often complete the dreadful work. But if human vices fail in this war of extermination, 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.

Thomas Robert Malthus. *Essay on the Principle of Populations* (1978).

4. The Cause was Intense Competition for a Limited Resource, Land

The cause of poverty in Ireland lies in the existing social conditions. The land is divided into small units for rental. This causes sharp competition between tenant farmers. It prevents farmers from investing in improving their farms.

Friedrick Engels. *Condition of the Working Class in England.*

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

The Great Irish Famine: An Ecological Tragedy?

BACKGROUND

This activity provides students with the opportunity to behave as historians and demographers by looking at current scholarship about the Great Irish Famine that has brought new methodologies and perspectives to the subject. The American scholar Joel Mokyr designed econometric models to create new demographic data about a pre-Famine Ireland while historians Mary E. Daly, Cormac O'Gráda, and geographer Kevin Whelan have added the ecological perspective to their studies of the Great Irish Famine. Whelan also observed "Pre-Famine population grew fastest where there was land available for it to grow and where institutional and social controls were weakest. It was poor land that developed heavy population pressure, and it was small, not big, farms that were sub-divided" (*Atlas* 84). This pattern of marginal lands being developed by the poorest people has continued down to our own time with disastrous results for the people and their environment.

Using background background information and handouts provided in this activity, students will compare the Great Irish Famine with famine in Bangladesh.

Teachers may also refer to the activity *Famine in Somalia.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Comparing Ireland and Bangladesh in the 1990s

ADDITIONAL READINGS

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

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

Mokyr, Joel. *Why Ireland Starved: An Analytical and Quantitative History of the Irish Economy, 1800-1850.* 2nd ed. London: Allen and Unwin, 1985.

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

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Compare the Great Irish Famine with famine in Bangladesh.

Explain why the poor are more likely to be victims of ecological disasters.

Analyze charts comparing Ireland and Bangladesh and draw conclusions.

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 evolution.

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

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.

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

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

Interpret geographic information by synthesizing data and developing conclusions and generalizations about geographic issues and problems.

Analyze the effectiveness of varying ways societies, nations, and regions of the world attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce resources.

Develop conclusions about economic issues and problems by creating broad statements which summarize findings and solutions.

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.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- evaluate and connect evidence
- interpret information and data
- reflect upon content
- identify patterns and themes
- draw conclusions

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to think about ecological threats like global warming, acid rain, droughts and floods that we face in our world today. Periodically we face our own ecological problems in New York State, such as when our water supplies run short in the summer. What are the causes of these conditions? Is it unrestrained growth? Is it poor planning? Is it the result of some kind of ecological accident?
2. The population of Ireland grew quickly during the first decades of the 19th century. Ask students to study the population graph of Ireland between 1800 and 1841 and to describe the trend on the graph. What was happening in Ireland in the first decades of the 19th century? Ask students to record the approximate population of Ireland in 1800, 1821, and 1841. (Demographers estimate that there were five million people in Ireland in 1800, more than six million by 1821 and eight million by 1841.) Could Ireland's population growth in the early nineteenth century lead to problems? What kinds of problems?

   The growth in population meant a growth in the demand for land. As a result, marginal lands and bogs

were settled. Small potato plots and potato ridges going up the sides of mountains supplied householders. What is the relationship between population growth and the quality of land? What are the long term prospects for such a relationship?

3. Pre-famine road building projects financed by the government to create employment opened poor areas in the south and the west like Caherciveen, Co. Kerry (1822) and Belmullet, Co. Mayo (1825) [Whelan 209]. Using their hypotheses about population growth, ask students to speculate about what kind of growth could have been expected in those areas.
4. Conditions for the poor in Ireland before the Great Irish Famine were those that we associate with the poorest people of the Third World: poverty that bordered on starvation during the seasons when food was in short supply, unemployment, low rate of literacy, sub-standard housing, marginal food plots and insecurity about their tenancy. The poor lacked the means to improve their land, and if they could, they would expect their rent would be raised. When the Great Irish Famine came, what would students expect to happen to people living so perilously?
5. Bangladesh, with 127 million people in 1998, is a densely populated country (1,900/square mile). The birth rate is 28.89 births per 1,000. The death rate is 10.6/1,000. It is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Largely agricultural, it has a single crop economy (rice). Bangladesh must export many of its workers to the Persian Gulf because there is not enough employment. Literacy in 1998 was 38 percent. The natural resources of Bangladesh have been exhausted. The trees have been cut; the soil has been overworked. There is limited access to drinking water because water sources have been contaminated by pesticides. The country is prone to drought and to seasonal cyclones. A substantial number of Bangladesh's landless population have settled in the southwest along the Bay of Bengal despite the danger of sudden storms in early summer and the late monsoon season that bring dangerous flooding. Since the eighteenth century it is estimated that over one million people have been killed by such storms. Ask students to investigate the disaster of April 1991, when a storm with waves twenty feet high struck the Bay of Bengal. What were the consequences?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Working in cooperative learning teams, prepare reports describing any similarities between the poorest Irish before the Great Irish Famine and the poor of Bangladesh before the 1991 typhoon. Why were the poor most likely to be the victims of the two ecological disasters?

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity was field-tested after the destruction of Hurricane Mitch (October-November 1998) which killed 10,000 people in Central America, left hundreds of thousands homeless, and destroyed the bananas, coffee, corn, and peanuts and other crops, and the fragile infrastructure of their agricultural economies.

The category 4 hurricane brought torrential rain. Where the hillsides had been cleared and the soil loosened, the rains caused mud slides. Rivers rose and burst their banks; flooding brought more death and destroyed roads and bridges. There were further fatalities because emergency help and relief supplies could not reach people isolated by the storm

Students could see a contemporary example of what happens when a natural disaster visits a fragile economy, made worse by ecological conditions, and then compare Ireland during the Great Irish Famine to countries like Nicaragua: the destruction to people living on marginal lands, the difficulty of getting relief supplies to disaster sufferers, the delays in providing essentials like clean drinking water which precipitates the spread of diseases like diarrhea, respiratory problems and fever, and the temporary public works projects to clear and rebuild roads, but no long-term employment for those who have lost their livelihood.

Comparing Ireland and Bangladesh in the 1990s

Source: Source: The World Factbook, 1998 (www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html)

Land	Ireland	Bangladesh
Location	Western Europe, occupying 5/6 of the island of Ireland in the North Atlantic Ocean, west of Great Britain	Southern Asia, bordering the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and India
Area	total: 70,280 sq km land: 68,890 sq km water: 1,390 sq km	total: 144,000 sq km land: 133,910 sq km water: 10,090 sq km
Area—comparative	Larger than West Virginia	Smaller than Wisconsin
Coastline	1,448 km	580 km
Climate	temperate maritime; modified by North Atlantic Current; mild winters, cool summers; humid; overcast about half time	tropical; cool, dry winter (October to March); hot, humid summer (March to June); cool, rainy monsoon (June to October)
Terrain	Level to rolling interior plain surrounded by rugged hills and low mountains; seacliffs on west coast	mostly flat alluvial plain; hilly in southeast
Elevation	low: Atlantic Ocean 0 m high: Carrauntoohill 1,041m	low: Indian Ocean 0 m high: Reng Tlang 957 m
Natural resources	zinc, lead, natural gas, peat, barite, copper, limestone, gypsum, dolomite, silver	natural gas, arable land, timber
Land use	arable land: 13% permanent crops: 0% permanent pastures: 68% forests and woodland: 5% other: 14% (1993 est.)	arable land: 73% permanent crops: 2% permanent pastures: 5% forests and woodland: 15% other: 5% (1993 est.)
Environmental issues	water pollution, especially of lakes, from agricultural runoff; over 40% of the population lives within 60 miles of Dublin	many people are landless and live on and cultivate flood-prone land; limited access to potable water; water-borne diseases prevalent; water pollution results from the use of commercial pesticides; intermittent water shortages because of falling water tables in the northern and central parts of the country; soil degradation; deforestation; severe overpopulation
Geography—note	strategic location on major air and sea routes between North America and northern Europe	droughts, cyclones; much of the country routinely flooded during the summer monsoon season

Government	Ireland	Bangladesh
Type	Republic	Republic
Capital	Dublin	Dhaka
Administrative divisions	26 counties	4 divisions
Independence	December 6, 1921 from United Kindom	December 16, 1971 from Pakistan
National holiday	Saint Patrick's Day, March 17	Independence Day, March 26
Constitution	adopted July 1, 1937 by plebiscite	effective December 16, 1972, suspended following coup, March 24, 1982, restored 10 November1986
Legal system	based on English common law, substantially modified by indigenous concepts;	based on English common law
Suffrage	18 years of age; universal	18 years of age; universal
Executive branch	chief of state: President Mary McAleese (since November, 1997). head of government: Prime Minister Bertie Ahern (since June, 1997) cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president with previous nomination by the prime minister and approval of legislative branch. elections: president elected by popular vote for a seven-year term; election last held 31 October 1997 (next to be held November 2001); prime minister nominated by the House of Representatives and appointed by the president	chief of state: President Shahabuddin Ahmed (since October, 1996), the president's role becomes significant when Parliament is dissolved and a caretaker government is installed. head of government: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed (since June, 1996) cabinet: Cabinet selected by the prime minister and appointed by the president elections: president elected by National Parliament for a five-year term; next election to be held by October 2001); the leader of the party that wins the most legislative seats is usually appointed prime minister by the president
Legislative branch	bicameral Parliament or Oireachtas consists of the Senate or Seanad Eireann and the House of Representatives or Dail Eireann	unicameral National Parliament or Jatiya Sangsad (330 seats; 300 elected by popular vote from single territorial constituencies, 30 seats reserved for women

People	Ireland	Bangladesh
Population	3,619,480 (July 1998)	127,567,002 (July 1998)
Age structure	0-14 years: 22% 15-64 years: 67% 65 years and over: 11%	0-14 years: 38% 15-64 years: 59% 65 years and over: 3%
Population growth rate	0.36% (1998)	1.76% (1998)
Birth rate	13.49 births/1,000 population (1998)	28.89 births/1,000 population (1998)
Death rate	8.51 deaths/1,000 population (1998)	10.6 deaths/1,000 population (1998)
Net migration rate	-1.39 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1998)	-0.69 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1998)
Sex ratio	at birth: 1.07 male(s)/female under 15 years: 1.06 male(s)/female 15-64 years: 1.02 male(s)/female 65 years and over: 0.74 male(s)/female (1998)	at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female under 15 years: 1.04 male(s)/female 15-64 years: 1.06 male(s)/female 65 years and over: 1.18 male(s)/female (1998)
Infant mortality rate	6.04 deaths/1,000 live births (1998)	97.67 deaths/1,000 live births (1998)
Life expectancy at birth	total pop.: 76.19 years male: 73.44 years female: 79.11 yrs. (1998)	total pop.: 56.66 years male: 56.69 years female: 56.63 years (1998)
Total fertility rate	1.82 children born/woman (1998)	3.32 children born/woman (1998)
Religions	Roman Catholic 93%, Anglican 3%, none 1%, unknown 2%, other 1%	Muslim 88.3%, Hindu 10.5%, other 1.2%
Languages	Irish (Gaelic), spoken mainly along the western seaboard, English is the language generally used	Bangla (official), English
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write)	total: 98%	total: 38.1%; male 49.4%; female 26.1%

Economy	Ireland	Bangladesh
Currency/ Exchange Rate	Irish pound (£Ir) $1 US= £Ir 0.7233 (1997)	Taka (Tk) $1 US= Tk 45.450 (1998),
GDP—real growth rate	6% (1997)	5.5% (1997)
GDP—per capita	$18,600 (1997)	$1,330 (1997)
GDP by sector	agriculture 8.5%; industry 38.3%; services 53.2%	agriculture: 30% industry 18%; services: 52%
Inflation rate	1.6% (1997)	2.5% (1996)
Labor force	1.52 million (1997)	56 million (1996), extensive export of labor to Persian Gulf
Unemployment rate	11.8% (1997)	35.2% (1996)
Industries	food products, brewing, textiles, clothing, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, machinery, transportation equipment, glass, crystal	jute manufacturing, cotton textiles, food processing, steel, fertilizer
Industrial growth rate	10.1% (1997)	5.3% (1996)
Electrical capacity	3.62 million kW (1995) per capita consumption 4,672 kWh (1995)	2.978 million kW (1995), per capita consumption 71 kWh (1997)
Agricultural products	turnips, barley, potatoes, sugar beets, wheat; meat, dairy products	rice, jute, tea, wheat, sugarcane, potatoes; beef, milk, poultry
Exports	value: $54.8 billion (1997) partners: UK 22%, Germany 13%, France 8%, US 6%	value: $3.9 billion (1996) partners: Western Europe 42%, US 30%, Hong Kong 4%
Imports	value: $44.9 billion (1997) partners: UK 29%, US 12%, Germany 10.2%, France 4%,	value: $6.9 billion (1996) partners: India 21%, China 10%, Western Europe 8%,
International debt	$14 billion (1996)	$17.1 billion (1996)
Telephones	900,000 (1987)	249,800 (1994)
Televisions	1.025 million (1990 est.)	350,000 (1993)
Highways	Expressways: 80 km paved: 87,042 km unpaved: 5,458 km	Expressways: 0 paved: 16,084 km unpaved: 207,307 km

Ireland- The economy is small and trade dependent. Agriculture, once the most important sector, is now dwarfed by industry, which accounts for 38% of GDP, about 80% of exports, and employs 27% of the labor force. Although exports remain the primary engine for Ireland's robust growth, the economy is also benefiting from a rise in consumer spending and recovery in both construction and business investment. Since the 1980s, inflation has fallen sharply and chronic trade deficits have been transformed into annual surpluses. Unemployment remains a serious problem, however, and job creation is the main focus of government policy. To ease unemployment, Dublin aggressively courts foreign investors and recently created a new industrial development agency to aid small indigenous firms.

Bangladesh- Bangladesh is one of the world's poorest, most densely populated, and least developed nations. Annual GDP growth has averaged over 4% in recent years from a low base. Its economy is largely agricultural, with the cultivation of rice the single most important activity in the economy. Major impediments to growth include frequent cyclones and floods, the inefficiency of state-owned enterprises, a rapidly growing labor force that cannot be absorbed by agriculture, delays in exploiting energy resources (natural gas), inadequate power supplies, and slow implementation of economic reforms. The current government has improved the climate for foreign investors. Progress on other economic reforms has been slow because of opposition from the bureaucracy, public sector unions, and other special interest groups.

Source: Alan Singer. The Great Irish Famine Curriculum Committee.

Note to *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum*: By the end of 2000, the per capita income in the Republic of Ireland was higher than Britain and above the European Union average.

A Call for Help in 1846: The Rush letter

BACKGROUND

The American immigration historian Kerby Miller has collected and studied the letters of Irish immigrants to North America. He made extensive use of letters in his book *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (1985). In his later research, Miller found a letter written or dictated by Mary and Michael Rush from Ardnaglass, Co. Sligo, on September 6, 1846, to Mary's father, Thomas Barrett, who had emigrated from Sligo to Quebec in the 1820s.

Kerby Miller's research traced the fortunes of the Rush family. Thomas Barrett could not afford to bring Michael and Mary and their family to Canada, so he applied to his local representative of the provincial parliament who recommended to Lord Elgin, the Canadian Governor General, that the British government subsidize Irish suffering from the famine so that they could join their families settled in Canada. Elgin and his superior in London rejected that and other recommendations that endorsed government-assisted emigration. Miller discovered that the Rush family did get to North America. They arrived in New York on the *Garrick* from Liverpool on May 15, 1847. There is no further information about the Rush family; however, it appears they never joined the Barretts in Quebec.

Miller notes the Rush letter is especially valuable to famine historians because so few letters written or dictated by the rural Irish in the nineteenth century have survived. The Rush letter was part of Barrett's appeal for help; it passed from Canadian officials to London where it appeared in official records called the *British Parliamentary Papers.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Rush Letter

Maria Edgeworth's Questionnaire

ADDITIONAL READINGS

"Further Papers Relative to Emigration to the British Provinces in North America [June 1847]," in *British Parliamentary Papers,* 1847 (824) xxix, pp. 70-77.

Miller, Kerby. *Emigrants and Exiles. Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America.* New York: Oxford, 1985.

Milner, Joseph and Lucy Milner, *Bridging English.* New York: Macmillan, 1993. (The biographical poem is a variation of the Milners' model on p. 138.)

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Interpret a letter written during the Great Irish Famine.

Evaluate the importance to historians of letters as primary source documents.

Create a biographical poem.

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.

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.

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

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.

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 drawing, and other documents.

Interpret and analyze information from textbooks and letters.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- observe and conclude
- reflective thinking
- inquire, question, probe
- think rationally about content
- conceptualize
- consult and interpret primary sources

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Distribute the handout *Rush Letter*, written by Michael and Mary Rush, and read it aloud. (It is printed as it was transcribed, so students will notice some differences in spelling and punctuation.)

Ask the students:

What does Michael and Mary's letter tell the Barretts about conditions in Ireland in the fall of 1846 when the potato has just failed for the second time?

What information do they give to the Barretts to emphasize that they are in danger of starving?

What food is available? Who has it?

How has the government responded to Ireland in its second year of famine? The Rushes say the government wants to keep people from going out into the field. Why?

What about livestock?

What crop do the people use to pay their rent?

Why is the landlord in a bad way?

What could happen to people who don't pay their rent?

Michael and Mary Rush have looked to the Barretts for help. What other resources do they have?

What about people who did not have family in North America?

Did the Rushes expect to have help from the government? If so, what kind of help?

Michael and Mary Rush mention or refer to God in their letter. Do they believe that God sent the famine?

Do they believe in Divine intervention?

They mention loaves and fishes. What do they mean?

What does that story have to do with the Great Irish Famine?

2. Ask students to describe Mary and Michael's emotions in their letter? What passages in the letter reflect their feelings?

3. Ask students to write an answer to Michael and Mary from the Barretts.

What do they know in Canada in 1846 about what was going on in Ireland?

What hope can they offer Michael and Mary?

4. Ask students to write a biographical poem about Michael or Mary. For example:

Mary Rush
wife of.....
daughter of.....
who feels.....
who needs.....
who fears.....
who would like to see.....
who lives
Rush

5. Ask students to compare the information from Ardnaglass, Co. Sligo, with the information provided by Maria Edgeworth later (January 30, 1847) to Central the Relief Committee, a private organization founded by the Irish Society of Friends (Quakers) to respond to famine conditions in Ireland when the government response was inadequate. Ask students: Was it better or worse in Longford? In both places, what happened to other food when the potato failed?

How does the Rush letter compare with other kinds information students have gathered about the Great Irish Famine?

ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

What kinds of information do historians acquire by reading historical letters like Mary and Michael's letter to the Barretts? Why are such letters valuable? What do letters tell you that information presented in other ways does not?

Write an essay sharing observations.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Students discussed the Barretts' situation in field tests of this activity. According to the Rush letter, the Barretts had sent Mary and Michael passage money more than once over the years, and they did not use it to go to Canada. Students wondered why the Rushes did not use the money for passage. Did they use the money to pay the rent, to see them through a hungry season, to buy a cow or pig, or to improve their holdings?

The concept of *timing* was discussed. During the Great Irish Famine some people decided to hang on in Ireland to see if conditions would improve with a new harvest. Students familiar with the literature of the European Holocaust were familiar with the dilemma of individuals who were undecided about whether to stay or go, until it was too late. Did that happen to the Rushes?

While the Barretts could not afford to send Michael and Mary passage money, they applied to their local

provincial representative, asking him to recommend the Rushes for the government program of assisted emigration. Students said that sometimes it is hard to help others ourselves, but it is possible to learn about individuals and organizations who can be of help.

Students found the biographical poems fun to do because they found they could write them easily. It gave them a structure and let them concentrate on finding the right words for each line. (Students are told that poetry is about intense language.)

Historian Kerby Miller tells us that Mary and Michael Rush did get to North America. Advanced students were offered the opportunity to write a journey poem, using either Michael or Mary as narrator. Ask students to see their journey to North America through Mary or Michael's eyes. This poem asks students to think about an internal journey, rather than an account of their actual passage. What happened to Mary or Michael throughout the journey? How did she/he feel at the start? What mental or emotional changes happened during the journey? What was his/her frame of mind when he/she arrived in New York? Students might think of their own emotions when they have moved from one place to another or have taken a long journey.

Rush Letter

6th September 1846 Ardnaglass

To Thomas Barrett
St. Columban, Deux Montagnes Co.
Canada East [Quebec]

Dear Father and Mother,

I received your kind and affectionate letter dated 24th May, which gave us great pleasure to hear of your being in good health as it leaves us at present; thank God for his mercies to us. Dear father and mother, pen cannot dictate the poverty of this country at present, the potato crop is quite done away all over Ireland and we are told prevailing all over Europe. There is nothing expected here, only an immediate famine. The labouring class getting only two stone of Indian meal for each days labour, and only three days given out of each week, to prolong the little money sent out by Government, to keep the people from going out to the fields; to prevent slaughtering the cattle, which they are threatening very hard they will do before they starve. I think you will have all this account by public print before this letter comes to hand. Now, my dear parents, pity our hard case, and do not leave us on the number of starving poor, and if it be your wish to keep us until we earn at any labour you wish to put us to we will feel happy in doing so. When we had not the good fortune of going there the different times ye sent us money; but alas, we had not that good fortune. Now, my dear father and mother, if you knew what danger we and our fellow countrymen are suffering, if you were ever so much distressed, you would take us out of this poverty Isle. We can only say, the scourge of God fell down in Ireland, in taking away the potatoes, they being the only support of the people. Not like countries that has a supply of wheat and other grain. So, dear father and mother, if you don't endeavour to take us out of it, it will be the first news you will hear by some friend of me and my little family to be lost by hunger, and there are thousands dread they will share the same fate. Do not think there is one word of untruth in this; you will see it in every letter and of course in the public prints. Those that have oats, they have some chance, for they say that they will die before they part any of it to pay rent. So the landlord is in a bad way too. Sicily Boyers and family are well; Michael Barrett is confined to his bed by rheumatism. The last market, oatmeal went from £1 to £1.1s. per cwt. As for potatoes, there was none at the market. Butter £5 per cwt., pork £2.8s per cwt, and every thing in provision way expected to get higher. The Lord is merciful, he fed 5000 men with five loaves and two small fishes. Hugh Hart's mother is dead; he is in good health. So I conclude with my blessings to you both and remain your affectionate son and daughter.

Michael and Mary Rush

For God's sake take us out of poverty, and don't let us die with the hunger.

Source: Letter used with the permission of Professor Kerby Miller.

Maria Edgeworth's Questionnaire

Questionnaire returned by Maria Edgeworth of Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford, to the Central Relief Committee, Dublin. Those applying for aid from the CRC were requested to provide information about the poor in their districts. Edgeworth responded on January 30, 1847. Respondents were directed to be brief and clear but were invited to make additional comments. (Ms 989 Edgeworth Papers, National Library of Ireland)

1. What is the name of the place on behalf of which assistance in sought?
Parish of Edgeworthstown, Co. Longford.

2. What is the extent of the district and the number of its inhabitants?
About 6 miles. Upwards of 5000.

3. How many are supposed to stand in need of public relief?
About 3000.

4. What proportion of able-bodied laborers are employed in the ordinary manner and at what rate of wages?
About 100 from 8 pence to 10 pence per day.

5. What proportion of able-bodied laborers are employed in public works?
About 400.

6. Are the earnings of the able-bodied laborers on public works or otherwise sufficient to preserve themselves and their families from want?
Certainly not at the present price of food.

7. Are there any manufacturers or is there other indoor productive employment for any considerable proportion of the population?
No.

8. Do the people derive any support from fishing and is there a harbor for fishing boats?
No.

9. Are farmers generally large or small? tillage (land cultivated) or grazing? held by tenants at will (with the landlord's permission) or on lease (a legal agreement giving a tenant occupancy for a fixed period of time)?
Small. Tillage. (Edgeworth did not respond to the question that asked whether tenants held land at will or on lease.)

10. Are the small farmers generally cultivating or about to cultivate their ground?
They are not, nor can they, as all their labor is going to procure provisions.

11. Is there any stock of potatoes stored, or remaining in the ground? Are there any reserved for seed? Are there any for sale? If so, at what price?
No.

12. Is it expected that any considerable quantity of potatoes will be planted in the coming season?
No.

13. What number of able-bodied laborers are supposed to be without employment?
Very few at present.

14. How many people are incapable of labor?

We can not altogether tell how many persons are incapable of labor—if widows, children and old persons are to be counted, above 500 in this district.

15. In what Poor Law Union does the place lie? How far distant is the Poor House (workhouse)? What spare accommodation does it at present afford?

Longford (town). 7 miles. It is full.

16. How much per pound were the last poor rates (property taxes to support relief)? When were they struck? Have they generally been paid?

7 and 1/2 pence and 5 pence. The last has been only partially collected.

17. Has a relief committee under provision of the acts 9 and 10 Vic. chap. 107 been formed? If so, state how it is designated.

Details and names given. John Powell, Vicar of Edgeworthstown Church of Ireland, Secretary of the Relief Committee. Maria Edgeworth. Frances Edgeworth.

18. What amount of public subscription towards the relief of the distress of the present season has been raised? What amount has been contributed by the government? If assistance in money or materials have been received from any Relief Association or other public body, please state the particulars.

Public subscription: 186 pounds. Government: 92 pounds. The Irish Relief Committee have granted 20 pounds for a soup shop (soup kitchen).

19. How have the funds so obtained been applied?

In selling food at a reasonable rate to the poor since September last.

20. Are there any considerable absentee proprietors of landed or other property within the district? What amount of subscription have been received from them?

Two. C.J. Edgeworth subscribed 25 pounds. (C.J. Edgeworth has a resident agent.) William Tuite subscribed 19 pounds.

21. Are there many resident proprietors or large farmers and have they generally subscribed to the Relief Fund?

One resident proprietor. A few large farmers. They have subscribed to the Relief Fund.

22. Are there any other Relief Associations within the district than that above mentioned? Is so, what funds have they raised? What relief measures are in operation by them and who are the managers?

No.

23. Are the families of the poor visited before relief is afforded, or is it proposed to carry out such a system?

All the families have been visited.

24. What is the state of the district with regard to sickness, especially fever?

There is a great deal of sickness and some fever.

25. What is the nearest place where provisions are stored in quantity?

Longford. Seven miles distant.

26. Are there stacks of provisions in the hands of retail dealers in the place? State prices.

Present retail prices:
Bread, 4 lb. loaf: 1 shilling
Wheat flour/stone (14 lbs): 4 shillings
Oatmeal/stone: 3 shillings, 6 pence
Indian meal/stone: 3 shillings
Beef/pound: three shillings, 5 pence
Mutton/pound: three shillings, 6 pence

27. Has a soup shop been established? If so, what number of gallons are made daily? Is it distributed without cost? If it is sold, what is the price?

Yes. 30 gallons. Three times/week. 1 penny per quart.

28. Would an increased supply and distribution of soup in the opinion of the applicants contribute essentially to the relief of the existing distress? If so, are there facilities for obtaining requisite materials? What additional means are wanted?

If bread could be given without increasing the prices.

29. Can the applicants refer to any person in Dublin to whom they are known, or any who possess sufficient knowledge to enable them to furnish additional information respecting the place or district there mentioned?

Details of reference.

Signed:
John Powell, Vicar of Edgeworthstown, Secretary of the Relief Committee, Maria Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown, Frances Edgeworth, Edgeworthstown. January 30, 1847

Additional Observations: The want of shoes is great and affects health and the power to labor, especially in draining work.

Source: MS 989 *Edgeworth Papers*, National Library of Ireland. Correspondence of Maria Edgeworth and Central Relief Committee in Dublin relating to distress in the Edgeworthstown area, 1847-8. Reprinted with permission of the National Library of Ireland.

Viewing the Famine as Judgment on the People of Ireland

BACKGROUND

Some members of the British government in the mid 1800s viewed the Great Irish Famine as a judgment on the people of Ireland. Famine and other calamities have been represented as four horsemen of the apocalypse because they represented war, famine, plague, and death. The famine-carrying horseman of the apocalypse were related to the view of some nineteenth century people called Providentialists. In his essay "Ideology and the Famine," Peter Gray defined Providentialism as "the doctrine that human affairs are regulated by a divine agency for human good." This activity addresses how people who believed in Providentialism viewed the causes of the Great Irish Famine.

This image has had a powerful influence on art, literature and popular culture. It was one of the images used in the 17th century during the English Civil Wars (1642-49), a conflict between the supporters of King Charles I, who were chiefly Roman Catholic, and Parliament, who was supported by the Puritans. One of the Puritan leaders was Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), who led the Parliamentary army, and who played a major role in the prosecution and execution of King Charles. As Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he pursued a *scorched earth* policy against Catholics and was responsible for the large-scale land confiscations that shifted ownership of Irish lands from Catholic to Protestant. For many Irish, Cromwell was regarded as the worst villain in the history of Ireland and as the Antichrist. Later political satirists continued to use the four horsemen imagery in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The imagery of the four horsemen of the apocalypse has been a forceful image for writers and artists during wartime. A poem written by W.B. Yeats, "The Second Coming" (1918), alludes to the apocalypse and the Book of Revelations to suggest that the war and violence in the first two decades of the twentieth century (World War 1, the 1916 Rising in Dublin and the Russian Revolution) were signs that:

> Surely some revelation is at hand;
> Surely the Second Coming is at hand.

During World War II, the English artist Benton Spruance (1904-67) produced a black and white lithograph called "Riders of the Apocalypse" (1943) that depicts bombers in flight. Their position suggests they are flying toward the continent on a mission.

Filmmakers have gone back to the image of the apocalypse and reinterpreted it in such movies as *The Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921) starring Rudolph Valentino, Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and Derek Jarman's *The Last of England* (1987).

Student sports fans might find it interesting to learn about the famous Notre Dame backfield of the 1930s known as The Four Horsemen. Another group of American men known as "the four horsemen" were four Irish-American politicians: Hugh Carey, Edward Kennedy, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill. In their case the designation "the four horsemen" did not mean forces of destruction; they were regarded by many as forces against destruction who worked together to influence American foreign policy to support non-violent solutions to the troubles in Northern Ireland.

Peter Gray suggests that the Great Irish Famine was a combination of Providentialism and the economics of the Manchester school economists, or those who regarded the famine as an opportunity to reform landlord/tenant relationships and to improve the structure of Irish agriculture by consolidating small farms.

(**Note:** This activity can be used in conjunction with *Causes of The Great Irish Famine.)*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Four Horsemen

Letter of Trevelyan to Lord Monteagle (2 versions for differentiated instruction)

Sir Charles Edward F. Trevelyan

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Gray, Peter. "Ideology and the Famine," in Cathal Póirtéir, ed., *The Great Irish Famine*. Dublin: Mercier Press, 1995. pp. 86-103.

Kissane, Noel. "Trevelyan's Attitude," in *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History.* Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995. pp. 50-51.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Explain the meaning of the Four Horsemen and the apocalypse.

Describe the use of figurative language in a letter discussing the Great Irish Famine.

Explain the influence of the Manchester economists on famine policy-making.

STANDARDS

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.

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. (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

Investigate how production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of goods and services are economic decisions with which all societies and nations must deal.

Make hypotheses about economic issues and problems, testing, refining, and eliminating hypotheses and developing new ones when necessary.

Develop conclusions about economic issues and problems by creating broad statements which summarize findings and solutions.

Analyze and interpret the ways in which political, cultural, social, religious, and psychological concepts and themes have been explored in visual art.

Analyze works of art from diverse world cultures and discuss the ideas, issues, and events of the culture that these works convey.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

. observe and conclude

. reflective thinking

. view information from a variety of perspectives
. interpret information
. consult and interpret primary sources

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to examine Albrecht Durer's famous woodcut "The Four Horsemen" (1498), one of the illustrations in his book *Apocalypse*. The figures represent war, famine, plague, and death. How would students describe the figures? How did they feel when they looked at the print? What kind of emotions did Durer expect his viewers to feel when they saw the images? Which of the figures is most destructive? Which figure is most menacing? Why does Famine carry a set of scales? What else do students notice about the way Famine is represented?

   The word apocalypse comes from the Greek word for *disclosing* or *unveiling* and it is associated with the Book of Revelations in the New Testament, the writings of St. John the Apostle. The writings are mysterious because they are visions of a final war with Satan where evil will be destroyed. They promise that the wicked would be punished and the good would be rewarded. What does the presence of famine among the four horsemen suggest? Is famine a judgment or a warning?

2. Charles Edward Trevelyan, the official of the British government who was most responsible for famine relief policy, took a moralistic view toward the famine. On October 9, 1846, Trevelyan wrote a letter to Lord Monteagle who managed his Country Limerick estate in a responsible way and who himself had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in the earlier Melbourne government. Ask students to read the concluding paragraph of Trevelyan's letter. What does Trevelyan say in his letter that identifies him as one who believes in Providentialism? What economic policy suggests that he was influenced by the Manchester economists?

   Even though this is a letter on government policy, economics and politics, Trevelyan uses figurative language to make his points more vividly to Lord Monteagle. What image does he use for his view of the present situation in Ireland? What is his metaphor for Ireland? Is it an effective metaphor?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

The British government and Trevelyan have been held responsible for the mass starvation and death in Ireland. How did Trevelyan regard the thinking that the blight was divine intervention that offered an opportunity for landlords to reform their agricultural practices lead to the disastrous famine relief policy that led to giving too little too late? What did the Irish need in October 1846, during a second failed harvest?

TEACHER REFLECTION

It would be useful to do this activity with the activity titled *View of Economists*. Students also might think about a contemporary example of an event which has been considered by some people to be a judgment: the AIDS epidemic. What is the response to a crisis if people believe it is Providential?

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Students can design a contemporary Four Horsemen poster. What would students label the horsemen today? Why?

"The Four Horsemen" (1498)
Albrecht Durer

Letter of Trevelyan to Lord Monteagle

I must give expression to my feelings by saying that I think I see a bright light shining in the distance through the dark cloud which at present hangs over Ireland. A remedy has been already applied to that portion of the maladies of Ireland which was traceable to political causes, and the morbid habits which still to a certain extent survive are gradually giving way to a more healthy action. The deep and inveterate root of social evil remains, and I hope I am not guilty of irreverence in thinking that, this being altogether beyond the power of man, the cure has been applied by the direct stroke of an all-wise providence in a manner as unexpected and unthought of as it is likely to be effectual. God grant that we may rightly perform our part and not turn into a curse what was intended as a blessing. The ministers of religion and especially the pastors of the Roman Catholic Church, who possess the largest share of influence over the people of Ireland, have well performed their part; and although few indications appear from any proceedings which have yet come before the public that the landed proprietors have even taken the first step of preparing for the conversion of the land now laid down to potatoes to grain cultivation, I do not despair of seeing this class in society still taking the lead which their position requires of them, and preventing social revolution from being so extensive as it otherwise must become.

Believe me, my dear lord, yours very sincerely,

C.E. Trevelyan, Treasury, 9 October 1846

Source: Noel Kissane. "Letter of Trevelyan to Lord Monteagle," *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History*. Dublin: The National Library of Ireland, 1995.

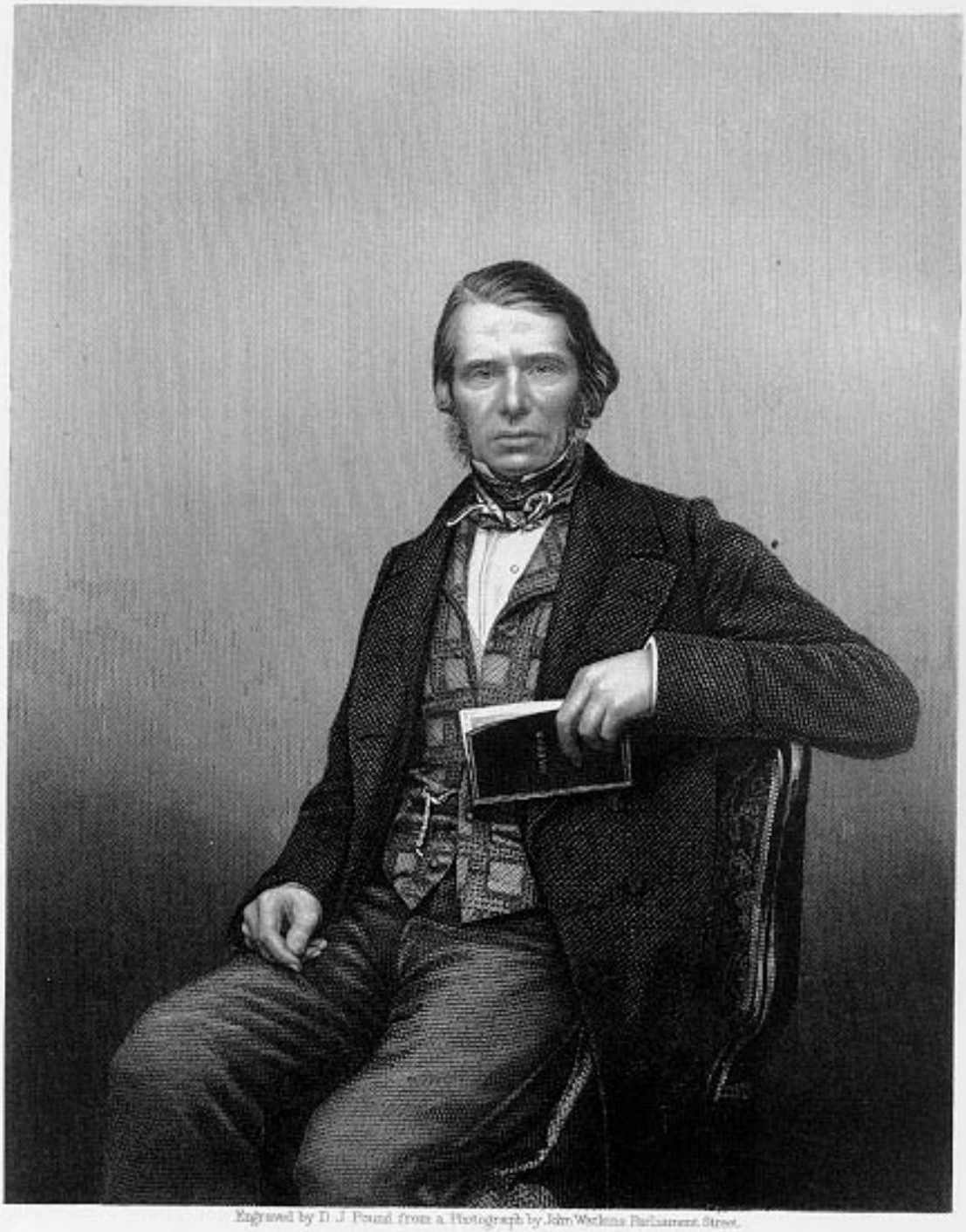
Letter of Trevelyan to Lord Monteagle

I think I see a bright light shining through the dark cloud which now hangs over Ireland. A remedy has been applied to that part of Ireland's illness which was due to political causes and the other bad habits. While they still survive, they are little by little being replaced by healthier habits. There are still deep problems in Irish society. Since everything is directed by divine not human power, God grant that we do our part to see that we do not make a curse of what was sent as a blessing.

So far we have few signs that the landlords are turning fields used to grow potatoes into fields that will be used to grow grain. I know the landlords will take the leadership roles that their class requires of them and that they will work to prevent the social revolution that would come if changes are not made.

Source: Noel Kissane. "Letter of Trevelyan to Lord Monteagle," *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History*. Dublin: The National Library of Ireland, 1995.

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



Engraved by D. J. Pound from a Photograph by John Watkins Parliament Street.

SIR CHARLES EDWARD F. TREVELYAN, K.C.B.

Source: Private collection. Maureen Murphy.

Responses of the Peel and Russell Governments

BACKGROUND

Sir Robert Peel was the British Prime Minister when the potato blight first appeared in Ireland. He authorized the purchase of American Indian corn, a food that did not interfere with the protected English agricultural market. The government established the Relief Commission to coordinate the work of local relief committees. In January 1846, Peel's government enacted a Public Works Bill that provided temporary *per diem* employment for able-bodied members of afflicted households. The government directed local Poor Law Guardians to provide fever hospitals apart from the workhouse so that the sick could be segregated. In April 1846, food depots were set up in the high needs areas of the south and southwest where Indian corn was sold by the government.

When the Peel government fell, Sir John Russell replaced Peel. His government was in power for the rest of the Great Irish Famine. Soon after he took office, Russell announced his government would not interfere with the food supply. "Having already stated the evils which have in practice arisen from interference by the government with the supply of public food, I have only to add that we do not propose to interfere with the regular mode by which Indian corn and other kinds of grain may be brought into the country." He added that the government would "take care not to interfere with the regular operations of merchants for the supply of food to the country."

As the famine crisis deepened, the Russell government passed a new Poor Law for Ireland, a law that was based on the assumption that the Irish were responsible for Irish relief. The law authorized government loans for public works projects, loans that would be repaid by local Poor Law rates (taxes). It was not until February 1847 that the Russell government enacted the Temporary Relief Act (The Soup Kitchen Act).

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *The Irish Poor Law* and *Designing Relief Legislation.*

RESOURCES

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Gray, Peter. "Ideology and the Famine," in Cathal Póirtéir, ed. *The Great Irish Famine.* Dublin: Mercier, 1995. pp. 86-103.

Kissane, Noel. "Relief Under the Conservatives," "Relief Under the Liberals," *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History.* Dublin: The National Library of Ireland, 1995. pp. 27-42, 45-57.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Chart on the board (see Learning Experience #1)

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe how two successive British governments responded to the potato failure that led to the Great Irish Famine.

Describe the similarities and differences between the Peel and Russell governments' economic policies.

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 evolution.

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.

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

Organize and classify economic information by distinguishing relevant from irrelevant information, placing ideas in chronological order, and selecting appropriate labels for data.

Develop conclusions about economic issues and problems by creating broad statements which summarize findings and solutions.

Identify, locate, and evaluate economic information from standard reference works, newspapers, periodicals, computer databases, monographs, textbooks, government publications, and other primary and secondary sources.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- acquire and organize information
- draw conclusions
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- reflect upon content/form opinions
- utilize multiple resources in research
- make generalizations

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Read aloud the background information in this activity. Ask students: How did the Peel government handle the issue of imported food, the government sale of food, and financing public works? What was the Russell government's response to the same issue? Complete the chart on the board.

	PEEL	RUSSELL
Imported food		
Government sale of food		
Financing public works		

Discuss: What were the differences between the approach of the Peel government and the approach of the Russell government to the famine crisis? What do students think would have happened if the Peel government stayed in power through the famine years? Would it have made a difference? What kind of a difference? Who financed relief for the poor - the entire British government or local Poor Rate payers (taxpayers) in Ireland?

Russell's government favored an economic approach called by the French term *laissez- faire* (to let do), the theory promulgated by the Scottish economist Adam Smith (1723-1790) that government intervention was interference that limited, rather than promoted, the economy. How is *laissez-faire* philosophy reflected in the Russell government's famine policies?

2. Ask students: What is the role of government in the economy? Using information about a current economic issue, ask students to argue in a paper whether governments should be more or less involved in the regulation of the economy. Paragraph one should describe the economic problem. The second paragraph should present the arguments, with supporting evidence, for the government role that the student does not favor. (The student acknowledges the opposing point of view.) The next three paragraphs

should make the case for the government role the student favors. Students should find three reasons to support their argument and write a paragraph about each reason (least to most important reason) using evidence: quotes, statistics, examples to support each reason. The last paragraph is the writer's conclusion: a restatement of the main point and a strong concluding sentence that answers the question "so what?"

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Review recent articles in magazines, journals, and newspapers that show a business writer's governmental viewpoint on the economy. (e.g., the President's explanation for tax code changes, a political candidate's viewpoint on interest rates, a business writer's predictions for the stock market.) Discuss what you think the writers/speakers are revealing about their economic philosophies.

TEACHER REFLECTION

Today most governments play active roles in directing the economy of their countries but political parties differ in their economic philosophies. The Peel/Russell differences offer a clear and dramatic example of the difference between a government which takes steps to regulate the economy in an emergency and a government who leaves the economy to market forces.

Note that field tests showed that students find lessons on the economy the most difficult of the social studies curriculum because they involve a level of abstract thinking. Students working in teams and debating the Peel/Russell philosophies had an opportunity to break down the ideas and talk about them while making their cases.

An even more challenging question can be asked: Is government's responsibility a moral responsibility?

Students might consider some contemporary examples of government intervention in the economy: mad cow disease in some countries of the European Union.

The *London Times* Writes About the Great Irish Famine

BACKGROUND

The Irish potato crop failed first in 1845. Sir Robert Peel, the British Prime Minister, introduced relief measures including importing American Indian corn, which helped to limit the effects of the scant potato supply. When the crop failed a second time in 1846, conditions worsened. There was also a change of government. Peel's Tory (Conservative) government was replaced by a Whig (Liberal) government led by Sir John Russell, which was in power for the duration of the Great Irish Famine.

The Russell government chose public works as the main means of relief and reduced Britain's financial contribution for Irish relief. The responsibility shifted from the British government to the Irish local rate payers (taxpayers) who were assessed to support the public works projects and the local workhouses. In the absence of government leadership, charities like the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends, the British Relief Association and the religious organizations stepped in to relieve the suffering of the Irish poor.

The consequences of the Whig famine policy were disastrous. The new public work schemes were highly localized, inefficient and inadequate. They were bound up in a labyrinthian bureaucracy, and projects were slow to materialize. When they did, the wages were poor—below the rising cost of food—and workers had to wait weeks to get paid. On top of that, the severe winter of 1846-1847 and the punishing cold hastened the death of the starving people, many of whom were suffering from famine-related disease. This season of mass death became known as Black '47.

Conditions in Ireland were made worse because Russell's government decided to allow merchants to continue to export food from Ireland during the Great Irish Famine. Throughout the rest of Europe where potato crops also were lost, governments closed ports to prevent the export of grain, but the British government did not interfere with the free market economy.

In early 1847 the government decided to establish soup kitchens (the Temporary Relief Act or Soup Kitchen Act), but once again there were delays in getting the programs in place—often in the areas of highest need. Eventually the program was the most successful government initiative to deal directly with hunger. The program was short-lived, because the government declared the Great Irish Famine *over* in the fall of 1847. If more assistance were required, it would have to be at the expense of the Irish taxpayers. A contributor to *The London Times* wrote that giving more money to Irish relief would be "as ineffectual as to throw a sackful of gold into one of their plentiful bogs."

Throughout the period, the pages of *The London Times, The Illustrated London News* and *Punch* carried accounts of the Great Irish Famine and did much to create public awareness of conditions in Ireland. When papers debated British policy in Ireland, their views tended to reflect their anti-Irish prejudices and include stereotypes like those expressed in the editorial from *The London Times* shown in the handout in this activity.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The London Times (3 versions for differentiated instruction)

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Gray, Peter. "Ideology and the Famine," in Cathal Póirtéir, ed., *The Great Irish Famine.* Dublin: Mercier: 1995, pp. 86-103.

Kissane, Noel. "The Role of the British Press," *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History.* Dublin: National Library of Ireland, 1995.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Analyze editorials from the 1846 *London Times* on the Great Irish Famine and write responses.

Describe personal views on the role of the government in resolving social problems.

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

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.

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

Interpret and analyze complex informational texts and presentations, including primary sources.

Establish an authoritative stance on the subject and provide references to establish the validity and verifiability of the information presented.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- evaluate and connect evidence
- probe ideas and assumptions
- take and defend positions
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- ask and answer logical questions
- identify premises and rationale for points of view
- probe assumptions for accuracy and viewpoints
- observe and conclude

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Throughout history, people have demanded that governments act to solve social problems. Ask students if they can give some examples of such government intervention (e.g., civil rights legislation). Do students think governments should develop programs to improve economic conditions or to directly help the poor? Should government provide funds for public assistance? Should government support public education and scholarship programs and financial aid for higher education?

   During the Great Irish Famine, the British government debated about its responsibility for relief programs for those suffering from hunger and disease. English newspapers of the time reflect government policy and public opinion.

   The handouts are in 3 versions (A, B, and C) as differentiated text. Ask students to read one of the versions of *The London Times* editorial, Part 1. This editorial was written in September 1846; the potato crop has failed for a second time. In the past when there had been a blight, the crop had been healthy the following season. Things were different in 1846. How do students think people were feeling in Ireland? This editorial addressed the Irish public's response to a second year of famine. According to *The London Times* editorial, what are the "worst symptoms of the Irish famine"? Whom does the editorial hold accountable for "turbulent" events in Ireland? What brought the blight? Why? How does the editorial writer regard the actions of the British government? Do students agree with the editorial position of *The London Times?*

2. Ask students to then read one version of Parts 2, 3 and 4 from *The London Times* editorial. According to the editorial, who is responsible for the suffering in Ireland? Why? Do students think the editorial opinion of *The London Times* is similar to or different from statements that some people make about welfare recipients in contemporary America? Can students think of examples to support their opinions?

. What is the attitude of the editorial writer of *The London Times* toward the Irish people? What kind of famine policy does the paper advocate? Why does *The London Times* editorial describe the potato blight as a blessing? How do students react to that statement? If you lived in England at the time, how would you have responded to *The London Times* editorial? How might your personal circumstances affect your point of view? If you lived in Ireland, would your response have been different?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Should *The London Times* editorial or any newspaper editorial be considered an accurate view of public opinion? Study five recent editorials and write your opinion on how you believe the editors arrived at their point of view. Does their point of view reflect the readership? How would the editors know what their readers think? Look at the editorials and describe what point of view the writer wants the reader to take. Ask each student to write a Letter to the Editor of *The London Times* responding to the editorial.

TEACHER REFLECTION

One of the most generous agencies of famine relief was the British Relief Association, founded January 1, 1847. People from all over Britain contributed to the fund. Individual contributors included Lord John Russell and Charles Trevelyan and Queen Victoria. What do students think of the difference between the private and public position of politicians and civil servants like Russell and Trevelyan?

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

Has *The London Times* editorial caused students to think about contemporary views about social welfare programs designed to address hunger and homelessness? Collect five newspaper editorials and write a paragraph about different aspects of the issues, a paragraph about the editorial arguments and a paragraph responding to the editorials. Write Letters to the Editor about social programs that are discussed in newspaper editorial sections.

The London Times, September 22, 1846
(Version A)

Passage 1

For our own parts, we regard the potato blight as a blessing. When the Celts once cease to be potatophagi (potato eaters), they must become carnivorous. With the taste of meats will grow the appetite for them. With this will come steadiness, regularity, and persistence. Nothing will strike so deadly a blow, not only at the dignity of Irish character, but also the elements of Irish prosperity, as a confederacy of rich proprietors to dun the national Treasury.

Passage 2

There are ingredients in the Irish character which must be modified and corrected before either individuals or Government can hope to raise the general condition of the people. It is absurd to prescribe political innovations for the remedy of their suffering or the alleviation of their wants. Extended suffrage and municipal reform for a peasantry who have for six centuries consented to alternate between starvation on a potato and the doles of national charity! You might as well give them bonbons.

Passage 3

The Government provided work for a people who love it not. It made this the absolute condition of relief. The Government was required to ward off starvation, not to reward laziness; its duty was to encourage industry, not to stifle it; to stimulate others to give employment, not to outbid them, or drive them from the labor markets. Alas! The Irish peasant had tasted of famine and found that it was good.

Passage 4

The worst symptoms of the Irish famine have begun to show themselves in the way of popular gatherings and processions, which at present are only turbulent, but may soon become outrageous. The twin powers of Fear and Rumor have lent their hands to the coloring of a picture already sufficiently somber. The people have made up their minds to report the worst and believe the worst. Human agency is now denounced as instrumental in adding to the calamity inflicted by Heaven. It is no longer submission to Providence, but a murmur against the Government. The potatoes were blighted by a decree from on high. Such are the thanks that a Government gets for attempting to palliate great afflictions.

The London Times, September 22, 1846
(Version B)

Passage 1

For our own parts, we regard the potato blight as a blessing. When the Irish once cease to be potato lovers, they must become meat eaters. With the taste of meats will grow the appetite for them. With this will come steadiness, regularity, and persistence. Nothing will strike so deadly a blow, not only at the dignity of Irish character, but also the elements of Irish prosperity, as a group of rich landlords billing the national Treasury.

Passage 2

There are ingredients in the Irish character which must be modified and corrected before either individuals or Government can hope to raise the general condition of the people. It is absurd to prescribe political solutions for the remedy of their sufferings or the lessening of their wants. Extended voting and municipal reform for a peasantry who have for six centuries consented to alternate between starvation on a potato and national charity! You might as well give them chocolate candies.

Passage 3

The Government provided work for a people who love it not. It made this the absolute condition of relief. The Government was required to ward off starvation, not to pamper indolence; its duty was to encourage industry, not to stifle it; to stimulate others to give employment, not to outbid them, or drive them from the labor markets. Alas! The Irish peasant had tasted of famine and found that it was good.

Passage 4

The worst symptoms of the Irish famine have begun to show themselves in public gatherings and protests, which at present are angry, but may soon become rebellious. The twin powers of Fear and Rumor have lent their hands to the coloring of a picture already sufficiently dark. The people have made up their minds to report the worst and believe the worst. Human actions are now blamed as responsible for adding to the disaster caused by Heaven. It is no longer submission to Providence, but a complaint against the Government. The potatoes were blighted by a decree from on high. Such are the thanks that a Government gets for attempting to relieve great suffering.

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

The London Times, September 22, 1846
(Version C)

Passage 1

This newspaper believes the potato blight was a blessing. When the Irish stop depending on the potato, they must become meat eaters. With the taste of meats will grow their appetite for them. With this will come steadiness, regularity, and persistence. Nothing will strike so deadly a blow at the dignity of Irish character and prosperity as allowing rich landlords to charge the national Treasury for relief programs.

Passage 2

There are ingredients in the Irish character which must be changed and corrected before either individuals or government can hope to raise the general condition of the people. It is ridiculous to try political solutions for ending sufferings or decreasing the desires of the Irish people. How will voting and reform help peasants who for six centuries alternated between starvation on a potato and national charity? The government might as well give them chocolate candies.

Passage 3

The English government provided work for a people who love it not. It made this the condition of help. The government was required to prevent starvation, not to reward laziness. Its duty was to encourage the growth of industry in Ireland, not to prevent it. Its task was to stimulate others to give people jobs, not to outbid them, or drive them from the labor markets. The problem is that the Irish peasant tasted of famine and found that it was good.

Passage 4

The worst symptoms of the Irish famine are that the people may become rebellious. Fear and Rumor make the situation dangerous. The Irish people report the worst and believe the worst. England is blamed for making a disaster caused by Heaven even worse. Instead of accepting that the potato blight was an act of God, the Irish complain about the government. The potatoes were destroyed by a decree from on high. Such are the thanks that the government gets for attempting to relieve great suffering.

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

Public Employment Programs: Russell and Roosevelt

BACKGROUND

This activity asked the question: How effective were the public employment programs of the Russell government during the Great Irish Famine and the Franklin Delano Roosevelt government during the American Depression? There is a basic philosophical difference behind the two programs. While Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, the Russell government determined that the welfare of Irish poor was Ireland's problem. It was the responsibility of Irish taxpayers of a Poor Law Union, the local property owners, to support the poor of the district.

The relief programs for the unemployed during the American Great Depression and other programs like social security established the principle that the American government, the federal government, was responsible for the welfare of its people. As tough as the Great Depression was for many Americans, there is no general perception that the government abandoned its people in their hour of need. Indeed, the government during the Great Depression institutionalized programs for the general welfare.

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *The Irish Poor Law* and *Designing Relief Legislation.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

Russell and Roosevelt

Public Works Projects

ADDITIONAL READINGS

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

Kissane, Noel. "Relief Works," *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History.* Dublin: The National Library, 1995.

Mitchell, Broadus. "Public Works." *Depression Decade from New Era Through New Deal: 1929-1941.* New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1947. pp. 314-348.

Morrison, Samuel Eliot. *The Oxford History of the American People.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Gather and evaluate information about the Irish Poor Employment Act of 1846 and the New Deal public employment legislation.

Explain the similarities and differences between the Russell and Roosevelt approaches to public employment programs by consulting information included on a chart prepared by students.

Describe the decisions made by governments during times of economic crisis and draw conclusions.

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 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

Identify historical problems, pose analytical questions or hypotheses, research analytical questions or test hypotheses, formulate conclusions or generalizations, raise new questions or issues for further investigation.

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

Investigate how people in the United States and throughout the world answer the three fundamental economic questions and solve basic economic problems.

Analyze the effectiveness of varying ways societies, nations, and regions of the world attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce resources.

Understand the nature of scarcity and how nations of the world make choices which involve economic and social costs and benefits.

Compare and contrast the United States economic system with other national economic systems, focusing on the three fundamental economic questions.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- think rationally about content
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- interpret information and data
- make generalizations
- identify patterns and themes
- observe and conclude

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Distribute and discuss the *Russell and Roosevelt* handout. Ask students: When the welfare laws were revised in 1996 they were said to substitute *welfare* with *workfare*. What does that mean? Governments have traditionally favored publicly funded work programs rather than give small cash subsidies to able-bodied workers. Why? Do you think that this is an appropriate policy?
2. Using information in the activity and gathered from print and non-print sources, ask students to complete the Public Works Projects chart.

ASSESSMENT OPTION

What are the similarities between the public works programs designed for the Great Irish Famine and for the New Deal? What are the differences? Why were the public works programs created by the New Deal more effective than the public works program created by the Russell government during the Great Irish Famine?

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity gives students the opportunity to reflect upon the relationship between a government's attitude toward the poor and its welfare legislation.

Ask students to think about the difference in legislation between the Russell's Famine Relief Program and Roosevelt's New Deal Programs. What does each say about the sense of community? Which government regarded the poor as *them*—as someone else's problem? How would Russell have described the Irish poor? How would Roosevelt have described the American poor?

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Design a political cartoon showing either Russell's or Roosevelt's attitude toward the poor.

Compare the Russell statements about employment programs for the poor with current workfare policy.

Russell and Roosevelt

In Ireland during the Great Irish Famine, the government of Lord John Russell relied on public employment projects to provide relief to the poor. The Poor Employment Act of 1846 provided funds for work of a "public nature." Nearly 100,000 were employed on public projects. Funding for projects depended heavily on the initiative and energy of the local relief committee. For the most part, landlords wrote the grant applications that went to the government. Some of the hardest hit areas like the barony of Erris in County Mayo and Skibbereen, County Cork lacked active landlords to make cases for local projects, so work did not necessarily go to the areas of greatest need.

The public work projects were financed by loans from the government which had to be repaid with interest by the local property owners. For some property owners, the question was how much were they willing to invest in public employment? They would, after all, be paying for it.

To work on one of the public employment schemes, a person had to have a work ticket. (Women and girls could be employed on the works as well as men and boys.) Only those whose names appeared on the list compiled by the local relief committee were eligible for a ticket. Since there were more seeking work than there were places, overseers or inspectors of the Board of Works had a large pool of workers available. There is little doubt that landlords exerted pressure on those officials to select favored tenants. Why would a landlord want to see his tenants' names on the employment list? There were a number of instances of favoritism and abuse of the system; at the very least, its bureaucracy was a burden to the poor. Given the rise in the cost of food in 1847, the Public Works laborer's wage was not sufficient to meet the cost of basic maintenance. To make matters worse, sometimes their wages were delayed.

Some farmers obtained work tickets, so they worked as laborers on the relief projects instead of on the land. In 1847, the only year in five (1845-1849) when there was not a blight, the potato crop was insufficient because fewer people had planted their crops.

During the American Great Depression, the federal government passed laws that created work for the unemployed. In 1933, during the first hundred days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration, Congress passed the laws establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps, a program that mobilized young unemployed males and set them living and working in forests and in national and state parks for a period not to exceed two years. CCC participants had to be between the ages of 17 and 25 and be suitable for strenuous labor. It was the first of the programs that helped preserve and enhance the nation's natural resources and protect the environment. The Federal Emergency Relief Act (1933) followed which had 4 million people working on public projects: roads, schools, parks, and airports by the following year. Perhaps the best-known program of the period was the Works Progress Administration (1935), a name later changed to the Works Projects Administration; the WPA set people working at a wide range of projects including projects in the arts. Some of the projects offered training as well as employment.

Under the New Deal, local committees of businessmen or municipal officials proposed projects to the government for funding. The projects were supported by federal funds—500 million dollars in 1934; local taxpayers were not financially responsible for the costs. Wages varied regionally, but generally the wage of a public works employee was not sufficient for basic maintenance. The New Deal had its own bureaucracy and was charged by its critics with wasteful spending.

Source: Maureen Murphy. *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum* Committee.

Public Works Project

Cast your vote! Which plan do you prefer? Why?

	Russell Government Great Irish Famine	FDR's New Deal American Depression
Who created the projects?		
Who funded the projects?		
How did people qualify for public works?		
How much did workers earn?		
Were the wages enough for basic maintenance?		

Public Works Projects: Conditions For the Poor

BACKGROUND

During the Great Irish Famine, the government relied on work projects that provided local employment for the poor who could then purchase sufficient food with their wages. In theory, that sounded like a good arrangement; however, there were some serious problems with the system, as shown in the handouts in this activity. Students will assume the role of the Board of Works, responsible for oversight of public works projects.

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

In Their Own Words: The Famine in North Connacht

Transactions of the Central Relief Committee

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Kissane, Noel. *The Irish Famine: A Documentary History. Dublin:* National Library, 1995. pp. 59-71.

Swords, Liam. *In Their Own Words. The Famine in North Connacht 1845-1849*. Blackrock: Columba Press, 1999.

Transactions of the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends During the Famine in Ireland in 1846 and 1847. Dublin: Edmund Burke, 1999 [1852].

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Describe the barriers to effective public work programs.

Create an action plan and memorandum for resolving the problems at the work sites.

Identify the conflicts between economic plans and theories and the practical application of the theories.

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.

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

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Analyze the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social and economic practices and activities.

Investigate how production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of goods and services are economic decisions with which all societies and nations must deal.

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

Analyze the effectiveness of varying ways societies, nations, and regions of the world attempt to satisfy their basic needs and wants by utilizing scarce resources.

Understand the nature of scarcity and how nations of the world make choices which involve economic and social costs and benefits.

Support interpretations and decisions about relative significance of information with explicit statement, evidence, and appropriate argument.

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

Develop arguments with effective use of details and evidence that reflect a coherent set of criteria.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- think rationally about content
- ask and answer logical questions
- interpret information and data
- find and solve problems
- make decisions about process
- reflect upon content/form opinions
- identify patterns and themes
- draw conclusions/make recommendations

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Working in groups, ask the students to read the page of excerpts from *In Their Own Words: The Famine in North Connacht* and *Transactions of the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends During the Famine in Ireland in 1846 and 1847*. What were the complaints of workers or those reporting about the conditions of workers? There are two responses for local employment officials, Henry Brett and Captain Burmester. What do they say?
2. Students will play the role of members of the Board of Works, the group charged with oversight responsibilities for the public works projects. It is March 10, 1847, and the Board has received the complaints that the students have read in their page of excerpts. What will their Board do about these reports? Will they send members down to investigate? If so, what people will they interview? What questions will they ask? How else will they gather information about what is really going on? Will they consider current wages in the context of current food prices? What about the delay in paying workers?
3. Students will create an action plan with at least five recommendations and write a memo describing their plan to the Prime Minister Sir John Russell. The memo should include a description of the problem with examples drawn from students' readings. Why did they pick the examples they did to bring to Sir John's attention? What are they proposing to do about the complaints? What are the points of the action plan?

Do they need any support from Sir John's government to implement the plan? What kind of support? Does the students committee have a time line for their action plan? Students know that people are starving. What kind of language will convey the urgency of the situation to Sir John?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

Write a response to these questions, drawing conclusions from your reading and observations:

What happens when people are not paid or do not receive benefits on time? What kinds of decisions do they have to make? How does their life change?

TEACHER REFLECTION

This activity is designed to use with the lesson titled *Public Employment Programs: Russell and Roosevelt*. Students find information about workers' wages and the cost of food provided in the activity titled *Maria Edgeworth's Analysis*. Students can use the food costs to create a data-based question about public works projects.

This activity will give students an opportunity to see that programs, however well-intentioned and well-planned, often have unanticipated problems. In this case, wages did not keep pace with the spiraling cost of food. The greater problem seemed to be an administrative one: workers were not paid on time. What happens when people are not paid or do not receive benefits on time? What kinds of decisions do they have to make?

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For advanced students:

How can organizations responsible for relief support and public works projects make sure that they work effectively? What factors should be considered? Contact local agencies to see how they strive to meet the needs of their clients.

In Their Own Words: The Famine in North Connacht

Sir Robert Lynch Blesse Chairman of the Balla Relief Committee, 21 December 1846:

Owing to the want of proper tools in the making of roads, the laborers are not earning sufficient to support one person, much less a family, in some instance only two pence a day. There was an inquest today on James Byrne of Brieze who died on 18 December. He had been employed on the relief works between Balla and Brieze. The verdict was that he died of starvation ... His wages were not paid regularly. A smith living near the town of Balla has been owned money by the engineer since last August.

Response to the above by county surveyor Henry Brett:

The reason why people were earning bad wages was chiefly owning to their unwillingness to do any work whatever. They were under the impression, and I have no doubt it was instilled into their minds, that they should get work whether they wrought or not (104).

From The O'Connor Don on Christmas Day, Castlerea, 1846:

The two clergymen of this parish and some hundred men are here complaining of the mode of payment. The men were offered one shilling and sixpence a day and are paid threepence a day working in bogs up to the calves of their legs in water. Payments are mostly made one batch by the day. Some of the men are in tears. Their children are starving.

Response to the above by Captain Burmester, Inspecting Officer to the O'Connor Don:

The men have nothing to complain of. If they were to cease to be dishonest and give a fair day's work for a fair day's wages, they would find that they could support themselves and their families. By their indolence, they baffle the calculations of the engineer and defraud the public, and on any attempt being made to induce them to exertion, they assemble in bodies to annoy and endeavor to intimidate their superiors (105).

William Bennett, 3 March 1847:

Here [Tubbercurry, Co. Mayo] we first encountered the public works so called. It was melancholy in the extreme to see the women and girls labouring in mixed gangs on the public roads. They were employed not only in digging with the spade and with the pick, but also in carrying loads of earth and turf on their backs and wheeling barrows like men and breaking stones, while the poor neglected children were crouched in groups, about the bits of lighted turf in the various sheltered corners along the line (149).

Source: Liam Swords. *In Their Own Words: The Famine in North Connacht.* Blackrock: Columba Press, 1999.
Used with permission of Columba Press.

Transactions of the Central Relief Committee

of the Society of Friends During the Famine in Ireland in 1846 and 1847:

George Hancock from Killybegs, Co. Donegal, 25 February 1847:

I went today to see the people making a government road. It was painful to see men, women and children engaged in this hard work, wasting quantities of powder in blasting, and even cutting up pieces of cultivated land when their time was wanted to till their own ground. About 1,500 are employed on these roads out of the population of about 10,000 of which the parish of Killybegs consists (171).

From James Harvey and Thomas Grubb, Limerick, 22 February 1847:

On our way to Milltown [County Clare), and on our return next day by Kilkee, we entered several cabins of the poorer cabins along the road, and in every instance administered some small relief, while we made enquires as to their modes of life and means of subsistence. The scenes which we witnessed, and the stories which we heard in these abodes of human misery, will not be easily effaced from our memory. All were poor in the extreme—some deplorably so; but it was the same sad tale we heard from all; their potatoes had failed, and their scanty stock of oats being all consumed, they are now solely dependent on the wages received from the road works. The applicants for employment are so numerous, that in most instances only one man in a family, and in some cases one, and a boy, woman, or girl, can obtain it. All work alike on the roads! The pay of a man is tenpence, a woman eightpence, and a boy sixpence per day; and when you consider that there may be broken days from sickness or severe weather—that the price of the lowest description of food is enormously high—and the families here average about seven individuals, you will not be surprised when we state, that they can scarcely support life under their many privations. Indeed, their week's wages, when exchanged for food, is not more than sufficient for three or four day's consumption (179-80).

Source: *Transactions of the Central Relief Committee of the Society of Friends During the Famine in Ireland in 1846 and 1847*. Dublin: Hodges and Smith, 1852.

British Government Treatment of the English Working Class

BACKGROUND

The British government of Lord John Russell has been condemned for failing to act compassionately during the Great Irish Famine. In his introduction to his *Jail Journal,* the Irish revolutionary John Mitchel charged that while Ireland starved, food to the value of fifteen million pounds sterling was exported to England whose own ample harvests in those years provided for more than double of its own population. Did the British government treat the Irish differently than they treated their own poor? There was no famine in England, but studies of the working class during the industrial revolution in England reveal the attitude of the government toward its poor. (The industrial revolution in Ireland was confined to the northeast where Belfast grew its ship-building and linen industries.)

Teachers may want to refer to the activities *The Irish Poor Law, Designing Relief Legislation,* and *Public Employment Programs: Russell and Roosevelt.*

RESOURCES

HANDOUTS

The Chimney Sweeper

Life Expectancy of the Working Class in England in the 1840s

A Comparison of Life Expectancy

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Engels, Frederick. *Conditions of the Working Class in England.* London: Swan Sonnenschien, 1882.

Thomson, David. *England in the Nineteenth Century.* Baltimore: Penguin, 1967.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Photos of child labor and poverty in 19th century England

Photos of child labor in underdeveloped countries in the 20th century

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

Create a two-stanza poem based on the concepts of William Blake's "The Chimney Sweeper."

Explain the multiple meanings of "The Chimney Sweeper."

Using primary sources, examine the conditions of the English working class in the 1840s and draw conclusions.

Debate and determine whether the British government's policy in Ireland was based on racism and religious prejudice toward the Irish or whether it reflected the economic philosophy of the times and the class nature of English society.

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

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.

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

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.

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

Relate new information to prior knowledge and experience.

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

Recognize different levels of meaning.

Make perceptive and well developed connections to prior knowledge.

Present a controlling idea that conveys an individual perspective and insight into the topic.

DIMENSIONS OF LEARNING

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

- analytical thinking
- evaluate and connect evidence
- observe and conclude
- consult and interpret databases
- view information from a variety of perspectives
- question arguments
- consult and interpret primary sources

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACHES

English Language Arts

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

1. Ask students to read passages about life expectancy and infant/child mortality from Frederick Engels, *Conditions of the Working Class in England* (1844) and study the charts and graphs of life expectancy by social class. How did Engels explain the low average age of death for "labourers, mechanics and servants"? Is there high infant and child mortality anywhere in the world today? Where? What is responsible for the high mortality rate? How was the Malthusian population argument used to justify the status quo? What did Engels think should be changed to improve the conditions of the working class?
2. Another problem among the working class in England in the 1840's was the problem of child labor. Ask students to read the handout of William Blake's *The Chimney Sweeper* from *Songs of Innocence* where the words of an innocent speaker condemn a system. The little sweep was sold by his father. He does not complain; he is not being ironic, but his innocent words provoke a sense of moral outrage in the reader against the exploitation of children.

   When Blake says "Cry, weep, weep, weep" he is mimicking a child's pronunciation of *sweep*. When Blake

says the sweeps were "lock'd up in coffins of black," he does not mean they were actually sleeping in coffins. What do the coffins symbolize? Are the chimneys black coffins? In what way are the bodies of young sweeps their own coffins? What kind of harmful things was the body of a young sweep exposed to while cleaning chimneys? What does Tom hear from the angel in his dream? Is Blake saying that the church says that if the sweeps just do their duty, however dangerous, they will be rewarded? Does Blake suggest England's state church supports the conditions of child labor described in "The Chimney Sweeper?"

3. Ask students to discuss child labor today: rug weaving, working in a sneaker factory, or sewing jeans. If, like Tom Dacre, one of those children went to sleep after work and had a dream, what would it be? Ask students to write their child's dream. Remember that Tom's dream had two parts: the angel comes with a key and releases the boys temporarily. Then the angel tells Tom he has nothing to fear if he does his duty. Ask students to write two stanzas about their child's dream. Their poems will be a twenty-first century answer to Blake's "The Chimney Sweeper." The first stanza will describe an idyllic release. In the last two lines of the second stanza that child will be told by someone that if he/she does his/her duty, there will be a reward. Who is the messenger? What is the duty? What is the reward?
4. According to Engels' writings and the documents, why were the working poor treated the way they were? If you were an English worker, how would you have responded? What would you have done about these conditions if you were well-off?
5. Based on his writings about the English working class, would Engels have agreed with Mitchel's charges? When we examine British attitudes toward the English working class and their attitude toward the Irish during the potato famine, are we looking at racial and religious prejudice? Are we looking at the way their social system worked at that time? Did the British government treat the Irish poor any differently than it treated the English poor? These are hard issues to resolve. What more do we need to know to help answer this question?
6. How would English attitudes toward the English poor have affected the Irish during the Great Famine?

ASSESSMENT OPTION

How are the attitudes toward the poor in England in the 1840s similar to or different from attitudes expressed in the United States today? In your opinion, are people poor in the United States today because of problems of the economic system, because of issues like racism or because of personal failures?

Using your own view, write your own editorial about local poverty or poverty in the United States. What facts or examples will you use to support your case?

TEACHER REFLECTION

During field tests of this activity, teachers suggested that the Engels passages should be offered in graph or chart form. This made the material more accessible and gave students practice in reading and interpreting information from graphs and charts. Some teachers use this activity to discuss child labor today and the human rights of adults and children.

Teachers found this activity in the abstract to be difficult for students, and added pictures depicting child labor and poverty in England in the 19th century.

ADDITIONAL LEARNING EXPERIENCE

For younger or advanced students:

Read sections of the novels by Charles Dickens to get a sense of child labor and poverty in England in the 1800's.

For advanced students:

Research and summarize findings on current child labor conditions around the world.

Investigate and report on current legislation on the United States that pertains to child labor.

Write an opinion essay responding to these questions:

Are social problems today the result of injustices like racism, prejudice or ignorance or are they just the way things work?

Are rules fair or prejudiced in favor of some groups over others?

Maybe the system does not work for everyone, but is it the best system we have?

How should we decide?

Illustrate the Blake poem.

The Chimney Sweeper

When my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue,
Could scarcely cry weep, weep, weep, weep,
So your chimneys I sweep & in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
That curl'd like a lambs back, was shav'd, so I said.
Hush Tom never mind it, for when your head's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair.

And so he was quiet, & that very night,
As Tom was a sleeping he had such a sight,
That thousands of sweepers Dick, Joe, Ned & Jack
Were all of them lock'd up in coffins of black.

And by came an Angel who had a bright key,
And he open'd the coffins & set them all free.
Then down a green plain leaping laughing they run
And wash in a river and shine in the Sun.

Then naked & white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds, and sport in the wind.
And the Angel told Tom if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for a father & never want joy.

And so Tom awoke and we rose in the dark
And got with our bags & and our brushes to work.
Tho' the morning was cold, Tom was happy and ward,
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

William Blake

Source: WIlliam Blake. "The Chimney Sweeper," *The Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. ed. David V. Erdman. Garden City: Doubleday, 1970. pp. 10. Permission pending.

Life Expectancy of the Working Class in England in the 1840s

In 1840 in Liverpool the average age at death of the gentry and professional persons was thirty-five years, of tradesmen and their families twenty-two years and of labourers and mechanics and servants was actually only fifteen years. The main reason for the high death rate was the heavy mortality among infants and small children. If both parents went to work for a living, or if either parent was dead, the child was so neglected that its health inevitably suffered. In Manchester nearly 54 percent of the workers' children die before attaining their fifth birthday. Only 20 percent of the children of the middle class die before they are five. In rural districts rather less than 32 percent of all children die before they are five.

Writing about infant and child mortality, Engels called for changes in the conditions that caused excessive mortality:

> *These unfortunate children are simply the victims of our extremely defective social arrangements which are perpetuated in the interests of the property-owning classes. The middle classes read these things every day in the newspapers, and do nothing at all about it. The middle classes should either put an end to this scandalous state of affairs, or they should hand over to the working classes the power to make regulations for the common good.*

Engels reported on a conversation with a middle-class gentleman in Manchester:

> *I spoke to him about the disgraceful unhealthy slums and drew his attention to the disgusting condition of that part of the town in which factory workers lived. He listened patiently and at the corner of the street at which he parted company he remarked, "And yet there is a great deal of money made here."*

In his book, Engels included a letter written to the *Manchester Guardian* complaining about the poor:

> *For sometime past numerous beggars are to be seen on the streets of our town. They attempt—often in a truly brazen and offensive manner—to arouse the pity of the public by their ragged clothes, their wretched appearances, their disgusting wounds, and sores, and by showing stumps of amputated limbs. I should have thought that those of us who not only pay our poor rates (taxes) but also subscribe generously to charitable appeals have done enough to claim the right to be shielded from such disgusting and revolting sights.*

Engels charged that England's attitude toward working people and the poor was based on a theory by Malthus that England was over-populated and the efforts to help the poor only made the situation worse.

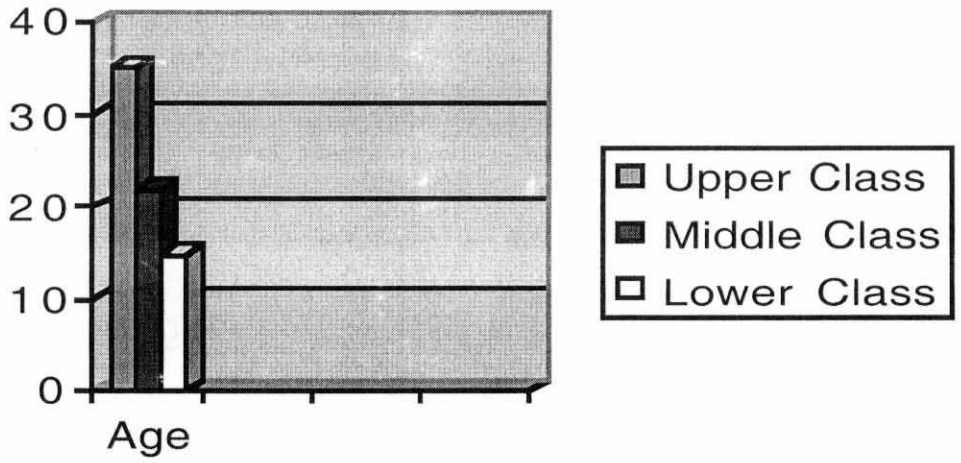
> *[Malthus] argues that because the world is always over-populated it is inevitable that hunger, distress, poverty and immorality will always be with us. Consequently men must be divided into different classes. Some of these classes will be more or less wealthy, educated and moral and others will be more or less poor, miserable, ignorant and immoral. From these facts Malthus comes to the conclusion that private charity and public provision for the poor are really useless since they merely serve to keep alive—and even to promote the growth of—the surplus population.*

Source: Frederick Engels. *Condition of the Working Class in England*. London: Swansonnenschoen, 1882 [1844].

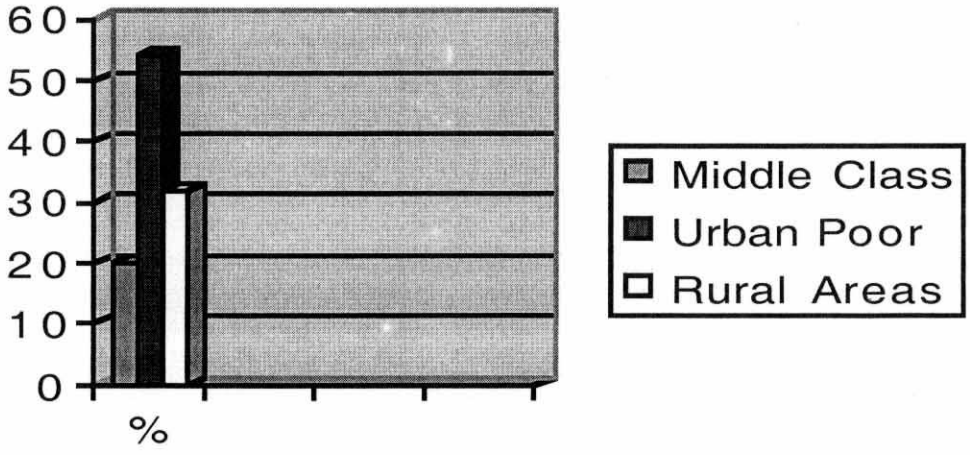
A Comparison of Life Expectancy by Social Class, 1840

	Urban Upper Class	Urban Middle Class	Urban Lower Class	Rural Population
Average age of Death, Liverpool, England	35	22	15	not available
Percent of child who die before age 5, Manchester, England	not available	20%	54%	32%

1. Average age of death, Liverpool, England, 1840



2. Percent of child who die before age 5, Manchester, England, 1840



Source: Alan Singer. *The Great Irish Famine Curriculum* Committee.

An Old Woman of the Roads

Oh to have a little house!
To own the hearth and stool and all!
The heaped-up sods upon the fire,
The pile of turf against the wall!

To have a clock with weights and chains
And pendulum swinging up and down,
A dresser filled with shining delph,
Speckled and white and blue and brown!

I could be busy all the day
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on their shelf again
My white and blue and speckled store!

I could be quiet there at night
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed, and loath to leave
The ticking clock and shining delph!

Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house or bush,
And tired I am of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!

And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying him night and day,
For a little house, a house of my own-
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

Padraic Colum

Source: Padraic Colum. *Selected Poems of Padraic Colum*. Preface by John Sweeney. New York: Devin-Adair, 1953. pp. 90. Permission pending.