

# LESSON PLAN

## A HISTORY OF IRELAND IN 100 OBJECTS, A SELECTION 5TH & 6TH CLASS LESSON PLAN

### Empty Cooking Pot 19th Century



#### Where to see this object

National Museum of Ireland  
– Country Life, Turlough Park,  
Castlebar, Co. Mayo  
[Click here to find out more](#)

#### Book a class trip to the museum

[Click here to find out more](#)

#### CURRICULUM LINKS

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##### History

**Strand:** Story  
**Strand Unit:** Stories from the lives of people in the past  
**Strand:** Eras of change and conflict  
**Strand Unit:** The Great Famine

##### English

**Strands:** Oral language; writing  
**Strand Unit:** Emotional and imaginative development through language

##### Geography

**Strand:** Human environments  
**Strand Units:** People and other lands; Trade and development issues – famine

##### SPHE

**Strand:** Myself and the wider world  
**Strand Unit:** Developing citizenship

##### Drama

**Strand:** Drama to explore feelings, knowledge and ideas, leading to understanding  
**Strand Unit:** Co-operating and communicating in making drama

#### RESOURCES

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- World map or atlases. [Scoilnet maps website](#) has a tutorial on how to view world maps and a link to a world map.

#### OBJECTIVES

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- To begin to work as a historian.
- To approach the object from an evidence-based viewpoint.
- To discuss the Famine and its effects.
- To empathise with the people who lived during that time.
- To recognise the connections between life at that time and life now.

## ASSESSMENT

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Drama  
Creative writing

## DIFFERENTIATION

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Drama

## LESSON

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- Display picture of the Empty cooking pot

### Discussion A (speculation)

- What do you think this is?
- How old do you think it is?
- Why do you think it's important historically?

### Read story of Empty cooking pot

It is recommended that children listen without seeing text on screen, which they can access at a later time.

### Discussion B

- Why were potatoes so important?
- How were they cooked?
- What did people notice first about the potato plants?
- When they went to harvest the potatoes, what did they notice?
- How many summers went by with no potato harvest?
- How many people died?
- How many people left the country?
- What is famine?
- What effects do you think the famine had on Ireland and the people who lived there?

### Activity - famines

- Here are just some countries that have experienced famine. Can you find them on a world map?

### World map on Scoilnet maps.

- China
- Ethiopia
- North Korea
- Sudan
- Russia
- Spain
- Some famines are caused by drought and poor weather or natural disasters. Others are man-made.
- How can a famine be man-made? (Governments with poor management of resources, war, etc.)
- The famine in Ireland was exacerbated by the fact that for some time the government of the day took corn and grain out of the country to be used abroad.

## Activities – Famine Memorial or Choctaw Native American nation

### Activity – Famine Memorial

- Picture of Famine Memorial by Rowan Gillespie (images in the 'look' button for this object)
  - Can you identify these figures?
  - Are they men or women?
  - Why is this sculpture at the quayside in Dublin?
  - What strikes you most about these figures?
  - Why is the dog there?
  - How do you think Rowan Gillespie felt making this sculpture?
  - Do you think he had a responsibility? To whom? To what?
  - Listen to the interview with Rowan Gillespie in the 'listen' button.

### Drama – freeze frame

*Assessment*

*Differentiation*

- Groups depict a family heading towards the quays during the Great Famine.
- Individuals in the freeze frame are tapped on the shoulder and brought to life to explain what is happening, how they feel, etc.

### Activity – Choctaw Native American nation

*Creative writing*

*Assessment*

The Choctaw Native American people raised \$170 to send over to Ireland to help the poor and starving during the famine. They had little money or resources themselves, but gave what they could. Sixteen years earlier the Choctaw people had been forced to move off their lands and many had died of starvation as a result.

There is a plaque in the Mansion House in Dublin, where the Lord Mayor lives, commemorating the generosity of the Choctaw people during the famine.

President Mary Robinson officially visited the Choctaw nation in 1995 to thank them for the money they sent to Ireland during the famine.

- Discussion: You are at a meeting of the Choctaw nation. The Famine in Ireland is brought up. A discussion ensues. Your job is to take notes of what is being said.

Children's book: *The long march: the Choctaw's gift to Irish famine relief* by Marie-Louise Fitzpatrick.

For further information: [Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma](#)

## EXTENSION EXERCISES

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### Visual arts – looking and responding

#### Images of Great Famine:

[Awesome stories](#)

[Illustrated London News](#)

[Multitext Project in Irish History](#)

#### History

Alexis Soyer was a renowned French chef who lived around the time of the Famine. He setup a soup kitchen in Dublin and he devised a recipe for a Famine soup. Click on the following topics for links.

[Alexis Soyer](#)

[Soyer's soup kitchen](#)

#### Objects from pupils

- Ask pupils to bring in objects that are significant in their own family history.
  - A. Video the pupils talking about their object.
  - B. Create a photostory with the pupils' objects. Below are links to explanations of photostory and blogging. Pupils speak over image of themselves with object. Cut to next pupil and object. Presentation includes all pupils in class.

#### Professional Development Service for Teachers:

- [How to use photostory](#)
- [How to blog your photostory](#)
- A or B is put up on school website.

#### Local history

- Is there an object of interest in the school's locality?

#### Maps

- Class looks up maps of local area around the time of the famine and into the 1900s. Scoilnet maps, see below:

[How to use OSI maps](#) in Scoilnet maps (including historic maps)

[Cross-curricular learning](#) with Scoilnet maps in primary schools

[Scoilnet maps](#)