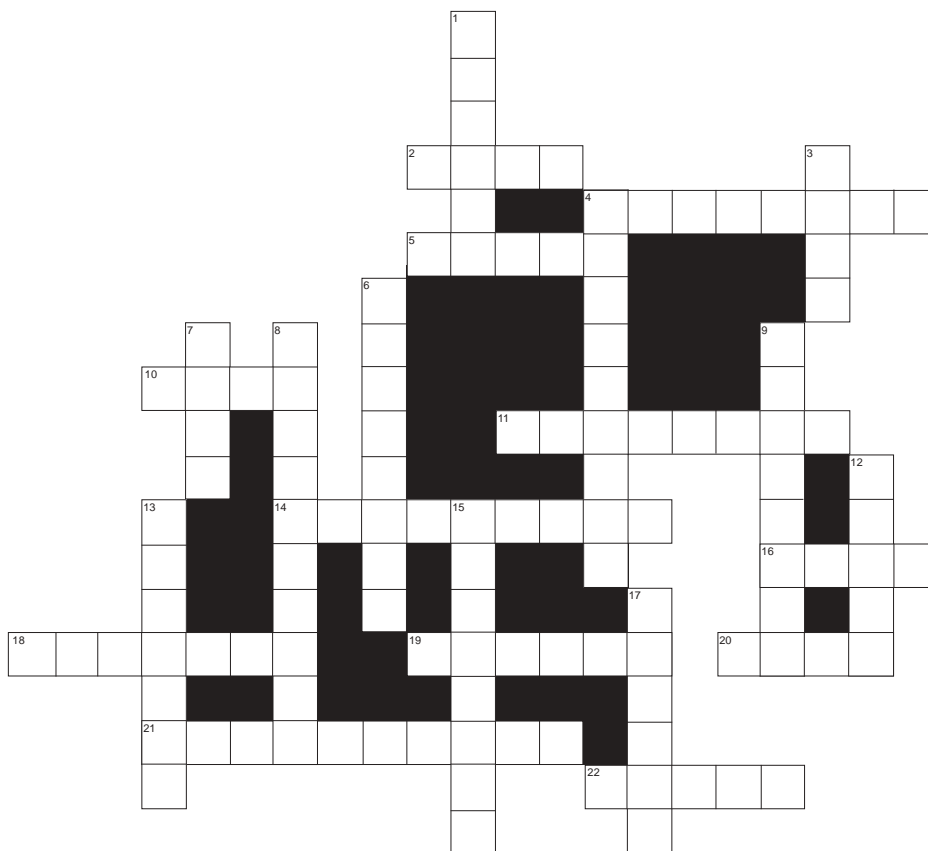


Saint Patrick's Day

1. On 17th March each year, Irish communities all over the world get together and have a party to celebrate Saint Patrick's Day. What do you know about Ireland and the Irish?

2. Find out more about Ireland and the Irish by completing the crossword. The answers are in the reading text on Worksheet B. Can you answer any of the questions before you read?



Across

2. What is the official colour of Ireland? (4)
4. Where did Ireland's original settlers come from? (8)
5. Which animal did 18 across banish from Ireland? (5)
10. What is the population of Ireland, in millions? (4)
11. What is the predominant religion in Ireland? (8)
14. What is the profession of 21 across? (9)
16. What was the original name for Ireland? (4)
18. Who is the patron saint of Ireland? (7)
19. In which country did 18 across spend 12 years? (6)
20. See 13 down.
21. What do we call a little person who lives in the woodlands of Ireland? (10)
22. How many shades of green are there in the Irish countryside? (5)

Down

1. What is the capital city of Ireland? (6)
3. What is the oldest official symbol of Ireland? (4)
4. How many US presidents have had Irish ancestry? (9)
6. What is the good-luck symbol of Ireland? (8)
7. What does every 21 across have a pot of? (4)
8. Which Irish author wrote *Dracula*? (4,6)
9. Which Irish drink was invented almost 250 years ago? (8)
12. How many leaves are there on a shamrock? (5)
13. and 20 across. What is another name for Ireland? (7,4)
15. What was once banned between the English and Irish? (8)
17. What is the family name of Irish actor Liam? (6)

Saint Patrick's Day

St Patrick

Saint Patrick was born in Britain at the end of the 4th century. When he was 16, he was sold as a slave in Ireland and worked as a shepherd. He escaped and spent twelve years at a monastery in France. Later, he returned to Ireland to teach people about Christianity. It is said that Saint Patrick banished all the snakes from the country. He became Bishop of Ireland in 431 and died on 17th March 461.

Irish symbols

The harp is the oldest official symbol of Ireland, but the shamrock, a symbol of good luck, is perhaps the most famous. When Saint Patrick first came to Ireland, he used the three leaves of the shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Ireland is also known as the Emerald Isle and it is said that the Irish countryside contains forty shades of green. Surprisingly, the official colour of Ireland is blue.

The legend of the leprechaun

When you are in Ireland, you might be lucky enough to see one of the little elf-like shoemakers who inhabit the woodlands of the Emerald Isle. According to legend, each leprechaun has a pot of gold hidden somewhere. If you catch him, he must give you his treasure. You have to be quick, though, because he will try to make you look the other way and escape into the forest.

Famous people

Writers Jonathan Swift (*Gulliver's Travels*), Bram Stoker, (*Dracula*), James Joyce, Oscar Wilde

Actors Peter O'Toole, Liam Neeson, Pierce Brosnan (the current James Bond)

Pop stars U2, Boyzone and Enya

Seventeen US presidents have had Irish ancestry.

In 1759 Arthur Guinness gave the world one of its most famous drinks.

3. Does your country have a patron saint? What is his/her name? What did he/she do? Do you have a special day when you celebrate him/her? How is this day celebrated?

A brief history

6000BC Earliest invaders arrive from Scotland.

1170 English rule begins.

1366 Marriages between the English and the Irish are banned.

1800 Population eight million.

1845-9 Potato famine results in mass emigration.

1900 Population almost 5 million.

1922 British rule ends. Ireland is known as the Irish Free State.

1949 Ireland becomes a fully independent republic, also known by its original name Eire. Dublin becomes the capital city. Six counties of Northern Ireland remain part of the UK.

Today Has a population of almost four million, predominately Catholic. The main political issue is Northern Ireland: should it be reunited with the south or remain part of the United Kingdom?

Teacher's Notes

Task

To read a text about Ireland and find answers to complete a crossword.

To discuss the patron saint of the student's own country.

Preparation

Make one copy of the two worksheets for each student.

Procedure

1. Tell the students that today (or whatever day it was/is) is Saint Patrick's Day. Explain that Saint Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland.
2. Give each student a copy of the two worksheets. Ask one student to read out the statement in (1) and then ask the students, in pairs or small groups, to discuss the question. Conduct a feedback session with the whole class and brainstorm as much as you can about Ireland.
3. Ask the students to do the crossword in (2) individually or in pairs. Explain that all the answers can be found in the reading text on the second worksheet.
4. Check the answers with the whole class. You could then ask a few more questions to check understanding and to give further reading practice. For example, *What did Saint Patrick do when he was a slave? Why is the shamrock an official symbol of Ireland?*
5. Ask the students to discuss, in pairs or small groups, the questions in (3) about their own country's patron saint.

Follow up

The students could prepare a presentation or poster about the patron saint of their country, doing research as necessary.

You might also like to show your students a few phrases in Irish:

Dia duit (pron. *dee-a huitch*) = Hello (lit. 'May God be with you.')

Dia is Muire duit (pron. *dee-a shmura huitch*) = Hello (to answer someone who says Dia duit) (lit. 'May God and Mary be with you.')

Conas atá tú? (pron. *konas atA too*) = How are you?

Tá mé go maith (pron. *taw may gumA*) = I'm fine

Go neiri an bothar leat (pron. *gu ny-eye-ri un voehur lat*) = Good luck (lit. 'May the road rise up to meet you.')

Websites

For more information about Ireland and Saint Patrick, visit the following sites:

www.historychannel.com/exhibits/stpatricksdays/main.html

www.wilstar.com/holidays/patrick.htm

Answers

