

## Sample United States History Lessons

**Aim 1: What was life like for Irish immigrants to the United States during the early national period?**

**Standards:** United States History (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4); Language Arts (3).

**Do Now Activity:** Read the letter from the British representative in Philadelphia to the British Secretary for Foreign Affairs and answer questions 1-3.

**Motivational Activity:** Is anyone in class an immigrant to the United States? Is there anyone whose parents or grandparents were immigrants? Why did you or members of your family come to the United States? What was life like for them before they immigrated? What was life like when they first arrived in the United States?

**Activity:** Read and discuss the letter from the British representative in Philadelphia to the British Secretary for Foreign Affairs

**Key Questions:**

How were people able to travel to the British colonies in America if they could not afford the fare?

What is the shift in Irish immigration to the United States?

In your opinion, what does this change suggest?

**Activity:** Read and discuss the letter from John Doyle to his wife.

**Key Questions:**

According to this letter, what was the hardest part about immigrating to the U.S.?

Why does Doyle think many people would stay home if they knew the truth?

In your opinion, why were men usually the first member of the family to migrate to the United States?

If you were a poor Irish agricultural worker during this time period, would you have been willing to make the sacrifices needed to migrate to the U.S.? Explain.

**Summary:** How was Irish immigration to the United States during the early national period similar to and different from immigration to the United States today?

**Application:** Read and discuss the traditional ballad about Irish immigration to the United States.

**Homework:** Interview an immigrant to the United States about the reasons they came to the United States and their experience when they arrived.

## Worksheet: Pre-Famine Irish Immigration to the United States

A) This is an edited version of a letter written in 1789 by a British representative in Philadelphia to the British Secretary for Foreign Affairs. During the colonial era, many Irishmen and women could not afford to pay their fare to the new world, so they arrived as indentured servants. According to the letter, this pattern appears to be changing.

Source: E. Abbott, ed., *Immigration: Select Documents and Case Records* (U. of Chicago, 1924).

Formerly, a large portion of the passengers from Ireland were indented servants. Those who could not redeem themselves by paying their passage money within a limited time, were indented for a term of years to any master who would advance the price of their passages. Lately, passengers from Ireland have chiefly paid their passage before they embarked; the passengers who have arrived this year have been for the most part people in tolerable good plight with some property who have come to settle as farmers or to engage in some branch of manufacture.

### Questions

- 1- How were people able to travel to the British colonies in America if they could not afford the fare?
- 2- What is there a shift in Irish immigration to the United States?
- 3- In your opinion, what does this change suggest?

B) Frequently families were divided when only one member could afford to immigrate to the United States. This letter was written by John Doyle on January 25, 1818 to his wife Fanny, who remained in Ireland.

Source: William D. Griffin, *The Book of Irish Americans* (Times Books, 1990), pp. 119-120.

Oh, how long the days, how cheerless and fatiguing the nights since I parted with my Fanny and my little angel. Sea sickness, nor the toils of the ocean, nor the starvation which I suffered, nor the constant apprehension of our crazy old vessel going to the bottom, for ten tedious weeks, could ever wear me to the pitch it has if my mind was easy about you. But when the recollection of you and of my little Ned rushes on my mind with a force irresistible, I am amazed and confounded to think of the coolness with which I used to calculate on parting with my little family even for a day, to come to this strange country, which is the grave of the reputations, the morals, and of the lives of so many of our countrymen and countrywomen.

As yet it's only natural I should feel lonesome in this country, ninety-nine out of every hundred who come to it are at first disappointed. Still, it's a fine country and a much better place for a poor man than Ireland. Much as they grumble at first, after a while they never think of leaving it. One thing I think is certain, that if emigrants knew beforehand what they have to suffer for about the first six months after leaving home in every respect, they would never come here.

### Questions

- 1- According to this letter, what was the hardest part about immigrating to the U.S.?
- 2- Why does Doyle think many people would stay home if they knew the truth?
- 3- In your opinion, why were men usually the first member of the family to migrate to the United States?
- 4- If you were a poor Irish agricultural worker during this time period, would you have been willing to make the sacrifices needed to migrate to the U.S.? Explain.

C) The Irish brought a great love of music with them to America. Many ballads refer to their hopes and dreams for life in the United States. In this ballad, the author remembers the life he left behind in Ireland.

Source: Robert L. Wright, ed., *Irish Emigrant Ballads and Songs*, Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1973, p. 354.

Oh I'm sitting on the stile (step) , Mary, where we sat side by side,  
On a bright May morning long ago when first you were my bride;  
The corn was springing fresh and green and the lark sang loud and high,  
And the red was on your lips, Mary, and the love lay in your eye.  
The place is little changed, Mary, the day is right as then,  
The lark's loud song is in my ear and the corn is green again;  
But I miss the softness of your hand and your breath warm on my cheek,  
And I still keep listening for the words, you never more will speak.  
'Tis but a step down yonder lane, the little church stands near,  
The place where we were wed, Mary, I see the spire from here;  
And the grave-yard stands between us both where you took your final rest,  
Where I laid you, darling, down to sleep with your babe all on your breast.  
I'm very lonely now, Mary, for the poor make no new friends,  
But oh they love the better still the few our Father sends;  
And you were all I had, Mary, my blessing and my pride,  
There's nothing else to care for now since my poor Mary died.  
I'm bidding you a long farewell, my Mary kind and true,  
But I'll not forget you, darling, in that land I'm going to;  
For they say there's bread and work for all and the sun shines always there,  
But I'll ne'er forget my Mary were it fifty times as fair.

### **Questions**

- 1- How does the author describe Ireland in this song?
- 2- What happens to Mary?
- 3- Why is the author of the song leaving Ireland for the United States?
- 4- In what way is Mary a metaphor for Ireland?

**Aim 2: Why did Frederick Douglass compare the Irish to enslaved African Americans?**

**Standards:** United States History (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4); Civics (5.2, 5.3, 5.4); Language Arts (3).

**Do Now Activity:** Read passage A and answer questions 1-3.

**Motivational Activity:** Have students listen to a recording of a song from the history of slavery in the United States. Possibilities include "Go Down Moses," "All the Pretty Little Horses," and . Discuss the meaning of the song's lyrics. Discuss the mood created by the song. What do we learn about slavery from these songs? Why is the message of the song so powerful?

**Activity:** Read and discuss passages B and C.

**Key Questions:**

Passage A) Why was Frederick Douglass considered a slave?

Why did Douglass refuse to tell people how he escaped to freedom?

How did Douglass help the Union win the Civil War?

Passage B) How did Frederick Douglass work to end slavery in the United States?

Why did Frederick Douglass travel to Great Britain?

Why was Frederick Douglass able to return to the United States?

Passage C) In your opinion, what does Frederick Douglass mean when he describes the songs of enslaved Africans as "the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish"?

**Summary Question:** The Irish men and women described by Frederick Douglass were free. In your opinion, why did Douglass compare their songs with the songs of enslaved Africans?

**Application:** There is still slavery in parts of the world today. One place is the Sudan in northeast Africa. Human Rights organizations are purchasing the freedom of people who are enslaved, but some critics charge that this encourages the slave holders to capture and resell people. Frederick Douglass' friends also purchased his freedom. In your opinion, are people who purchase the freedom of slaves doing the right thing? Why?

**Homework:** Use the information in the Worksheet: The Life of Frederick Douglass to write a biopoem of Frederick Douglass.

## **Worksheet: The Life of Frederick Douglass**

Source: F. Douglass, My Bondage and My Freedom.

### **A) Who was Frederick Douglass?**

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

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

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

### **Questions**

- 1- Why was Frederick Douglass considered a slave?
- 2- Why did Douglass refuse to tell people how he escaped to freedom?
- 3- How did Douglass help the Union win the Civil War?

### **Passage B- Why was Frederick Douglass in Great Britain?**

Even after he had reached the north, Frederick Douglass was still considered a runaway slave and the property of his former master. Douglass decided to fight to end slavery in the United States. He joined the abolitionists and travelled around New England giving anti-slavery lectures. In 1845, Frederick Douglass wrote pamphlets that described his experience as a slave. The publication of these pamphlets put Douglass in danger of being captured and being returned to the south.

Abolitionist friends helped Frederick Douglass escape to Great Britain where he lived for almost two years. While living in Great Britain, Douglass travelled across England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, gave lectures on the evils of slavery, and wrote articles for abolitionist newspapers in the United States. During this time his supporters purchased his freedom for \$700. This made it possible for Frederick Douglass to return to the United States as a free man.

**Questions**

- 1- How did Frederick Douglass work to end slavery in the United States?
- 2- Why did Frederick Douglass travel to Great Britain?
- 3- Why was Frederick Douglass able to return to the United States?

**Passage C- Why did Douglass compare the Irish and enslaved Africans?**

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

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

"I have never heard any songs like those any where since I left slavery, except when in Ireland. There I heard the same wailing notes, and was much affected by them. It was during the famine of 1845-1846 (When Douglass wrote his book he had the year wrong. It was actually 1846-1847)."

**Questions**

- 1- In your opinion, what does Frederick Douglass mean when he describes the songs of enslaved Africans as "the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish"?
- 2- The Irish men and women described by Frederick Douglass were free. In your opinion, why did Douglass compare their songs with the songs of enslaved Africans?

**Aim 3: Why did the Great Irish Famine lead to a wave of immigration to the United States?**

**Standards:** United States History (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4); World History (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4).

**Do Now Activity:** Complete this activity working in pairs or in groups. If you were moving to a new country to settle permanently and all you could take with you are the things that fit an old large trunk, 3'x2'x2', what would you pack? Be prepared to explain your choices.

**Motivational Activity:** Make a list of things students would pack in their trunks. Discuss the reasons for their choices. How would the selections be different if you were Irish immigrants coming to the United States in the 1840s because of the Great Irish Famine? Why would they be different?

**Activity:** Examine the graph, "Immigration from Ireland to the United States." Discuss key questions.

What kind of graph is this? What years are shown on this graph?

Why do you think the graph begins and ends in these years?

How many people migrate to the U.S. from Ireland in 1845? 1847? 1851? 1855?

What is happening to immigration from Ireland to the U.S. during these years?

If you were a historian who found this data, what would you want to look at next?

Why?

**Activity:** People immigrate to a new countries when something attracts them, or pulls them to a new country, and when conditions in their old country are pushing them out. Examine the cartoons and drawings from the mid-nineteenth century. Describe what you see in the cartoon or drawing.

What is pulling the Irish to the United States?

What is pushing them to leave Ireland?

**Summary Question:** Why did so many Irish men and women decide to migrate to the United States at the middle of the nineteenth century?

**Application:** Do you think the United States should welcome new immigrants from countries where people are suffering great hardship? Explain.

**Homework:** Go around your house and prepare two lists of items you absolutely must take with you if your family was forced to move to a new country and you did not know what things would be like there. For List # 1, you will have no space limit. For List # 2, you must fit everything you take into an old large trunk that is 3'x2'x2'.

## Worksheet - Immigration from Ireland to the United States

### Immigration from Ireland to the United States

Source: R. Edwards and T. Williams (1956). *The Great Famine, Studies in Irish History*.

Year	Irish immigration to the U.S.
1842	49,000
1843	23,000
1844	37,000
1845	50,000
1846	68,000
1847	117,000
1848	154,000
1849	177,000
1850	181,000
1851	216,000
1852	193,000
1853	157,000
1854	111,000
1855	57,000

#### Questions

1- What kind of graph is this? \_\_\_\_\_

2- What years are shown on this graph? \_\_\_\_\_

3- Why do you think the graph begins and ends in these years? \_\_\_\_\_

4- How many people migrate to the U.S. from Ireland in 1845? \_\_\_\_\_

1847 \_\_\_\_\_ 1851 \_\_\_\_\_ 1855 \_\_\_\_\_

5- What is happening to immigration from Ireland to the U.S. during these years?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6- If you were a historian who found this data, what would you want to look at next?

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Aim 4: What problems faced Irish immigrants in the United States?**

**Standards:** United States History (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4); Language Arts (3).

**Do Now Activity:** Imagine you are a historian studying about problems facing Irish immigrants to the United States in the nineteenth century. Make a list of sources you would examine to find the information you need to piece together their story.

**Motivational Activity:** How can historians learn about the lives of ordinary people. List student ideas from the do now activity. How can we use these sources to find the information historians need to piece together the stories of immigrants?

**Activity:** Examine the lyrics to the songs, "Paddy Works on the Railway" and "No Irish Need Apply." Students can work individually or in groups, or the entire class can read the songs together. Students groups can also read different songs.

**Key Questions:**

- "Paddy Works on the Railway"

Why does Paddy put on "corduroy breeches"?

Why does Paddy tell us he is "more dead than alive"?

Why would someone attack Paddy with "stones and sticks"?

What happened to Paddy, Bidy, and their children?

- "No Irish Need Apply"

What is another word for a "situation"?

Why is the young man angry when he reads the advertisement?

How is the problem resolved in the song?

In your opinion, is this a realistic solution to the problem? Explain.

Does this song include stereotypes? Explain.

In your opinion, can we rely on these songs as historical documents? Explain.

**Summary:** What kind of problems did Irish immigrants to the United States face in the nineteenth century? Why do immigrants often face problems in a new country?

**Application:** Are there songs like these in our contemporary culture? Which songs? How are they similar to "Paddy Works on the Railway" and "No Irish Need Apply"? How are they different?

**Homework:** Write a poem or a song that tells a story about immigrants to the United States.

### A) Paddy Works on the Railway

This traditional Irish American folk song has many versions and verses.

Source: E. Fowke and J. Glazer, *Songs of Work and Protest* (Dover, 1973).

In eighteen hundred and forty one, I put my corduroy breeches on, I put my corduroy breeches on, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty two, I left the old world for the new, bad cess (luck) to the luck that brought me through, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty three, 'twas then I met sweet Biddy McGee, an elegant wife she's been to me, while working upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty four, I landed on America's shore, I landed on America's shore, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty five, I found myself more dead than alive, I found myself more dead than alive, from working on the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty six, they pelted me with stones and sticks, and I was in one hell of a fix, from working on the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty seven, Sweet Biddy she died and went to heaven, if she left one child, she left eleven, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

In eighteen hundred and forty eight, I found myself at heaven's gate, I found myself at heaven's gate, from working on the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

It's "Pat, do this!" and "Pat, do that!", without a stocking or cravat (scarf), and nothing but an old straw hat, to work upon the railway.

Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, Filly-me-oori-oori-ay, to work upon the railway.

#### Questions:

- 1- Why does Paddy put on "corduroy breeches"?
- 2- Why does Paddy tell us he is "more dead than alive"?
- 3- Why would someone attack Paddy with "stones and sticks"?
- 4- What happened to Paddy, Biddy, and their children?
- 5- In your opinion, can we rely on this song as a historical document? Explain.

## B) No Irish Need Apply

The earliest written version of this popular song is from 1865. It was part of the oral tradition in both the United States and Canada. Ballyfadd is a small town in southeastern Ireland. The Tribune was a New York City newspaper. "Milia murther" is a Gaelic phrase that means "a thousand murders."

Source: E. Fowke and J. Glazer, *Songs of Work and Protest* (Dover, 1973).

I'm a decent boy just landed from the town of Ballyfadd; I want a situation and I want it very bad.

I have seen employment advertised, "It's just the thing," says I,  
But the dirty spalpeen (rascal) ended with "No Irish Need Apply."

"Whoo," says I, that is an insult, but to get the place I'll try,"

So I went to see the blackguard with his "No Irish Need Apply."

Some do think it a misfortune to be christened Pat or Dan, but to me it is an honor to be born an Irishman.

I started out to find the house; I got there mighty soon.

I found the old chap seated; he was reading the Tribune.

I told him what I came for, when he in a rage did fly.

"No!" he says, "You are a Paddy, and no Irish need apply."

Then I gets my dander rising, and I'd like to black his eye

For to tell an Irish gentleman "No Irish Need Apply."

I couldn't stand it longer so a-hold of him I took,

And I gave him such a beating as he'd get at Donnybrook,

He hollered "Milia Murther," and to get away did try,

And swore he'd never write again "No Irish Need Apply."

Well, he made a big apology; I told him then goodbye,

Saying, "When next you want a beating, write 'No Irish Need Apply.'"

### Questions

1- What is another word for a "situation"?

2- Why is the young man angry when he reads the advertisement?

3- How is the problem resolved in the song?

4- In your opinion, is this a realistic solution to the problem? Explain.

5- Does this song include stereotypes? Explain.

6- In your opinion, can we rely on this song as a historical document? Explain.

**Aim 5: What were conditions like on Irish emigration ships to the new world?**

**Standards:** United States History (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4); Language Arts (3).

**Do Now Activity:** Read passage A about a ship taking Irish immigrants from Liverpool, England to New York and answer questions 1-3.

**Motivational Activity:** How do immigrants arrive in the United States today? Do all immigrants come to the United States in the same way? (Discuss legal and undocumented immigrants and "boat people" from countries like Haiti, Cuba and Vietnam) What was the trip like for Irish immigrants during the famine years?

**Activity:** Read and discuss passage A about a ship taking Irish immigrants from Liverpool, England to New York.

**Key Questions:**

Why did the doctor throw the chamber pots overboard?

Why did the doctor demand that sick people come to see him?

Why was the storm so frightening?

How were people buried at sea?

In your opinion, why did Catholic passengers object to funeral services being conducted without priests?

In your opinion, why did people call these ships "coffin ships"?

What could have been done to improve conditions on these ships? In your opinion, why wasn't it done?

**Activity:** Read and discuss passage B by Robert Whyte about a ship taking immigrants from Ireland to Quebec, Canada.

**Key Questions:**

Do you think the Captain was right or wrong when he threatened to shoot people who were demanding the ship's food? Explain.

Why does the author describe illness on the ship as "awful"?

Why were the passengers upset when they arrived at the immigration station in Quebec, Canada?

**Summary Question:** In your opinion, why were the emigration ships from Ireland to North America called "coffin ships"?

**Application:** In your opinion, would this kind of treatment of refugees be accepted in the world today? Explain.

**Homework:** Current events. Locate a newspaper article about people who are refugees today. What has been their experience as refugees? How is it similar to and how is it different from the experience of Irish refugees on the emigration ships?

**Irish Emigration to America in the Famine Years**  
(adapted from Peter Gray, *The Irish Famine*, NY: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1995)

A) Vere Foster was a British diplomat. He described conditions aboard a boat taking Irish immigrants from Liverpool, England to New York during the Great Irish Famine.

November 17. The doctor this evening heaved overboard a great many of the chamber-pots belonging to the female passengers, saying that henceforward he would allow no women to do their business below, but that they should come to the filthy privies on deck. I heard him say, "There are a hundred cases of dysentery in the ship, which will all turn to cholera, and I swear to God that I will not go amongst them; if they want medicine they must come to me."

November 22. A violent gale became perfectly terrific; for a few minutes we all expected momentarily to go to the bottom, for the sea, which was foaming and rolling extremely high, burst upon the deck with a great crash, which made us all believe that some part of the vessel was stove in. The wave rushed down into the lower deck, and I certainly expected every moment to go down. Some of the passengers set to praying; the wind blew a perfect hurricane, so that it was quite out of the question to attempt to proceed on our proper course.

November, 25. Another child, making about 12 in all, died of dysentery from want of proper nourishing food, and was thrown into the sea sown up, along with a great stone, in a cloth. No funeral service has yet been performed, the Catholics objecting to the performance of any such service by a layman.

**Questions**

- 1- Why did the doctor throw the chamber pots overboard?
- 2- Why was the storm so frightening?
- 3- How were people buried at sea?

B) Robert Whyte tells the story of his trip from Ireland to Quebec, Canada in 1847. Nothing is known of his later life except that he settled in the United States.

June 16: The past night was very rough, and I enjoyed little rest. No additional cases of sickness were reported, but there were signs of insubordination amongst the healthy men who complained of starvation and want of water for their sick wives and children. A deputation came to acquaint the captain with their grievances, but he ordered them away, and would not listen to a word from them. When he went below the ring leaders threatened that they would break into the provision store. In order to make a deeper impression on their minds, he brought out the old blunderbuss from which he fired a shot, the report of which was equal to the report of a small cannon. The deputation slunk away muttering complaints.

June 25: It was awful how suddenly some were stricken. A little child, playing with his companions, suddenly fell down, and for some time sunk in deadly torpor, from which when he awoke he commenced to scream violently and wreath in convulsive agony. A poor woman who was warming a drink at the fire for her husband also dropped down quite senseless and was borne to her berth.

July 28, Grosse Isle, Quebec: By 6 AM we were settled in our new position before the quarantine station. The poor passengers were dressed in their best clothes and were clean, though haggard and weak. They were under the impression that the sick would be immediately admitted to the hospital and the healthy landed upon the island, there to remain until taken to Quebec by a steamer. I could not believe it possible that here, within reach of help, we should be left as neglected as when upon the ocean. That after a voyage of two months' duration we were to be left still enveloped by reeking pestilence, the sick without medicine, medical skill, nourishment or so much as a drop of pure water. The river, although not saline here, was polluted by the most disgusting objects thrown overboard from the several vessels.

### **Questions**

- 1- Do you think the Captain was right or wrong when he threatened to shoot people who were demanding the ship's food? Explain.
- 2- Why does the author describe illness on the ship as "awful"?
- 3- Why were the passengers upset when they arrived at the immigration station in Quebec, Canada?

**Aim 6: Should Canada and the United States have restricted Irish immigration during the famine years?**

**Standards:** United States History (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4); Language Arts (3).

**Do Now Activity:** Read the excerpt from the letter from the Canadian Parliament to Great Britain and answer the question.

**Motivational Activity:** The Statue of Liberty in New York harbor holds up a symbolic lamp to welcome new immigrants to the United States. But today, many people call for restrictions on immigration. There were tighter restrictions in the past, especially from 1924-1965. Do you think new immigrants should be welcomed or barred from entry? Why?

**Activity:** During the Great Irish Famine large numbers of Irish immigrants entered the United States and Canada. Read and discuss the letter from the Canadian Parliament to Great Britain.

**Key Questions:**

Why is Canadian Parliament concerned about the large number of new immigrants from Ireland and Great Britain?

In your opinion, is their primary concern for the new immigrants? Explain.

**Activity:** Read and discuss the reports by the staff at the Gross Isle, Quebec quarantine station .

**Key Questions:**

According to the report by Dr. Douglas, what percentage of the passengers on the ships from Ireland either died or are severely ill?

According to Mr. Buchanan, why do people on board fall ill so quickly?

Why is Mr. Buchanan concerned about what will happen in the future?

**Summary Question:** Did the United States and Canada have a responsibility to open their doors to Irish immigrants during the Great Irish Famine? Explain.

**Application:** Does the United States have a responsibility to open its doors to refugees from war and natural disasters today?

**Homework:** Write a letter to your local Congressman. In the letter, explain your view on the question: Does the United States have a responsibility to open its doors to refugees from war and natural disasters today?

### **Worksheet: Should Irish immigration be restricted?**

A) In 1847, the Canadian Parliament appealed to Great Britain to restrict immigration from Ireland and Great Britain.

The arrangements for the reception of the sick at Grosse Isle, the quarantine station, have proved wholly inadequate to the unexpected emergency; the entire range of buildings intended for the use of emigrants generally, at the station, have been converted into hospitals, and are still insufficient for the numerous and increasing sick. While the people of the province are most desirous to welcome to the colony all those of their fellow-subjects who may think it proper to emigrate from the parent country, we are convinced that a continued emigration of a similar character to that which is now taking place, is calculated to produce a most injurious effect upon our prosperity. We beseech (beg) your Majesty not to permit the helpless, the starving, the sick and diseased, unequal and unfit as they are to face the hardships of a settler's life, to embark for these shores, which if they reach, in too many instances only to find a grave.

**Question** Why is Canadian Parliament concerned about the large number of new immigrants from Ireland and Great Britain?

B) Reports from the staff at Grosse Isle, Quebec quarantine station in 1847.

Dr. Douglas: Every vessel bringing Irish passengers has lost many by fever and dysentery on the voyage, and has arrived here with numbers of sick. Seventeen vessels have recently arrived. The number of passengers with which these vessels left port was 5,607; out of these 260 died on the passage, and upwards of 700 have been admitted to hospital, or are being treated on board their vessels, waiting vacancies to be landed.

Mr. Buchanan: Out of the 4,000 or 5,000 emigrants that have left Grosse Isle since Sunday, at least 2,000 will fall sick somewhere before three weeks are over. They ought to have accommodation for 2,000 sick at least in Montreal or Quebec, as all the passengers are half dead from starvation and want before embarking; and the least bowel complaint, which is sure to come with change of food, finishes them without a struggle. Hot weather will increase the evil.

#### **Questions**

- 1- According to the report by Dr. Douglas, what percentage of the passengers on the ships from Ireland either died or are severely ill?
- 2- According to Mr. Buchanan, why do people on board fall ill so quickly?
- 3- Why is Mr. Buchanan concerned about what will happen in the future?

**Aim 7: How did Irish immigrants describe their life in North America?**

**Standards:** United States History (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4); Language Arts (3).

**Do Now Activity:** Imagine you are an immigrant to a new country. What would you write about in letters home to your family and friends?

**Motivational Activity:** Do you have friends or family who live in another part of the country or the world? How do we keep in touch with people with care about today? Irish immigrants to North America during the Great Famine wrote letters home to family and friends. We can learn a lot about their lives in the new world from these letters.

**Activity:** Divide the class into three groups. Each group reads one letter sent home by Irish immigrants to North America. Groups answers questions and report about the letter to the entire class.

**Key Questions:**

In your opinion, which of these immigrants had the most difficult time in North America? Explain.

In your opinion, why do conditions seem to be better for Irish immigrants in the United States than in Canada?

**Summary Question:** How did Irish immigrants describe their life in North America?

**Application:** Imagine you were a family member in Ireland who received one of these letters. Write a response.

**Homework:** If you immigrate to another country today you can keep your family informed about your new life using modern technology. Prepare one of the following to let people in the old world know about your life in your new country:  
a) a web site; b) a photograph album; c) a scrap book with magazine pictures.

### **Worksheet: Letters from Irish Immigrants to North America**

A) A letter from Bryan Clancy, St. John, New Brunswick, November 17, 1847.

Dear mother and brother,

I take the favourable opportunity of writing these few lines to you hoping to find you are all in as good health. We were very uneasy for ever coming to this country for we were in a bad state of health. During the voyage there was a very bad fever aboard. Peppy took the fever on the Ship and was taken to the cabin by the Captain's wife and was there from a week we were on sea till we come to quarantine. Then all the passengers that did not pass the doctor was sent to the Island and she was kept by the Captain's wife on the ship. Peppy was relapsed again and sent to Hospital and remained there nine or ten days but thank be to God we got over all the disorders.

I was at work at a dollar per day, but the place got very bad and no regard for new passengers nor even a nights lodging could be found. I met with Andy Kerrigan and he took me with him to his house and remained there for a month boarding.

Mary took a very bad fever and was despaired of both by priest and doctor. As soon as she got well, Andy took the same disease. I am sorry to relate that poor Biddy Clancy and Catherine McGowan died in Hospital and a great many of our friends.

I often wished to be at home again bad and all as we were. We often wished we never seen St. John. We are sorry for that we cannot send any relief to you. Any new passengers except they have friends before them are in distress. It's very hard to get work here.

The government are about to send all the passengers that were sent out here by Lord Palmerston and Sir Robert home again because they are sure that all of them that did not perish surely will this winter. I am very glad that Catherine did not come to this place for a great deal of our neighbours died here.

#### **Questions**

- 1- Why is Bryan Clancy "uneasy" about his decision to come to North America?
- 2- What happened to people on board the boat and in the quarantine station?
- 3- Why is the government thinking of sending them back to Ireland?
- 4- Based on this letter, what is life like for Irish immigrants to North America?

B) A letter from Catherine Hennagan, St. John, New Brunswick, February, 15 1848.

Dear Father and Mother,

I take the present opportunity of letting you know that I am in good health, hoping this will find you and all friends the same. I wrote you shortly after I came here but received no answer which makes me very uneasy until I hear from you and how you are. We had a pretty favourable passage. We cast anchor at Partridge Island after 5 weeks passage. There were 4 deaths on the passage but the second day after we arrived here and after the doctor came on board the sickness commenced. We were then put on the Island for 3 weeks and the end of which time my dear Little Bidy died. Thank God I got safe off and continue to enjoy good health since. Pen could not write the distress of the Irish passengers which arrived here through sickness, death and distress of every kind. The Irish I know have suffered much and is still suffering but the situation of them here even the survivors at that awful time was lamentable in the extreme. There are thousands of them buried in the Island and those who could not go to the States are in the poorhouse or begging through the streets of St. John. If you would wish to come here I would like you was here as I think times will mend here after some time and dear father I will soon send you some help. No more at present, but I remain your affectionate daughter till death.

### **Questions**

- 1- Why is Catherine Hennagan worried about her family in Ireland?
- 2- What happened to Little Bidy?
- 3- What does Catherine Hennagan want her father to do?
- 4- Based on this letter, what is life like for Irish immigrants to North America?

C) A letter from Eoin Boyle, Augusta, Maine, December 13, 1847.

Dear Mother,

I write these few lines to you hoping to find you in good health. We were four weeks at sea. God favoured me I never was one day sick. The very night that I landed I got sick and kept the bed for two weeks and after that I fell in to good employment at four shilling per day British money. My sister Elon was employed the day after we landed in St John, New Brunswick. My sister Margaret left St. John and went to Boston which I was very sorry that I did not get to see her. Elon went after her to Boston and I got no account from them. I am working at present in the State of Maine on Real Road. The rate of wages all this summer was four shilling per day British. The wages during the winter is three shilling per day. I am getting along well here and getting good health. This is a good country for strong bodied men and very good place for girls. Good smart girls have 6s. shilling per week and their board.

### **Questions**

- 1- What happened to Eion Boyle when he arrived in North America?
- 2- Why did Eion Boyle and his sisters go to the United States?
- 3- What kind of work is Eion doing in Maine?
- 4- Based on this letter, what is life like for Irish immigrants to North America?

**Aim 8: How did nativism affect mid-nineteenth century Irish immigrants to the United States?**

**Standards:** United States History (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4); Language Arts (3).

**Do Now Activity:** Examine the cartoon depicting Irish immigrants to the United States.

1- How are the Irish portrayed in this cartoon?

2- In your view, what does this cartoon tell us about American attitudes toward Irish immigrants?

**Motivational Activity:** In your opinion, how are immigrants received in the United States today? In your view, why are some people against immigration? How are anti-immigrant feelings expressed in the United States? How would you respond to someone who says that immigrants can never be "real" Americans? Why?

**Activity:** Define Nativism. Notes.

1- Nativism: The belief that some immigrant groups can never become real Americans and should not be allowed to enter the country.

2- During United States history many different immigrant groups have been challenged by nativist groups.

3- In the first half of the 19th century, nativists argued that Irish immigrants could never be "real" Americans.

**Activity:** Examine the cartoon depicting Irish immigrants to the United States. How are the Irish portrayed in this cartoon? In your view, what does this cartoon tell us about American attitudes toward Irish immigrants? In your opinion, does this picture illustrate nativism? Explain.

**Activity:** Student teams examine worksheets 1, 2 or 3 for evidence of nativism in the mid-nineteenth century United States and report on their findings to the class.

**Summary Question:** What were the attitudes of nativist groups toward Irish immigrants to the United States?

**Application:** In your opinion, are attitudes towards immigrants similar or different today?

**Homework:** Write a letter to your local congressional representative explaining your views on immigration to the United States today.

## Worksheet 1- Irish Immigrants in New Orleans

The author of this article was sympathetic toward Irish immigrants. He felt they were being unfairly treated. Read the article and answer the questions.

1- How does the author describe conditions for Irish immigrants who are working on the canal in Louisiana in 1833 and their families?

2- In your opinion, is the treatment of the Irish in New Orleans related to anti-Irish prejudice? Explain your views.

A) "One of the greatest works now in progress here, is the canal planned to connect Lac Pontchartrain with the city of New Orleans. I only wish that the wise men at home who coolly charge the present condition of Ireland upon the inherent laziness of her population, could be transported to this spot. Here they subsist on the coarsest fare; excluded from all the advantages of civilization; often at the mercy of a hard contractor, who wrings his profits from their blood; and all this for a pittance that merely enables them to exist, with little power to save, or a hope beyond the continuance of the like exertion."

B) "Here too were many poor women with their husbands; I contemplated their wasted forms and haggard sickly looks, together with the close swamp whose stagnant air they were doomed to breathe, and fancied them, in some hour of leisure, calling to memory the green valley and the pure river of their distant home."

C) "At such works all over this continent the Irish are the labourers chiefly employed, and the mortality amongst them is enormous. At present they are, where I have seen them working here, worse lodged than the cattle of the field; in fact, the only thought bestowed upon them appears to be, by what expedient the greatest quantity of labour may be extracted from them at the cheapest rate to the contractor. Slave labour cannot be substituted to any extent, being much too expensive; a good slave costs at this time two hundred pounds sterling, and to have a thousand such swept off a line of canal in one season, would call for prompt consideration."

D) "Christian charity and justice should suggest that the labourers ought to be provided with decent quarters, that sufficient medical aid should always be at hand, and above all, that the brutalizing, accursed practice of extorting extra labour by the stimulus of corn spirit should be wholly forbidden."

## Worksheet 2- Irish Immigrants in New York City

This article is from the diary of George Templeton Strong, who lived in New York City. They were written between 1838 and 1857. Read the article and answer the questions.

1- How does Mr. Strong describe the Irish in New York City?

2- In your opinion, should Mr. Strong be considered a nativist? Cite evidence to explain your view.

A) "It was enough to turn a man's stomach to see the way they were naturalizing this morning. Wretched, filthy, bestial-looking Italians and Irish, the very scum and dregs of human nature filled the office so completely that I was almost afraid of being poisoned by going in."

B) "We had some hard fighting yesterday in the Bloody Sixth Ward, and a grand no-poperly riot last night, including a vigorous attack on the Roman Catholic Cathedral with brick bats and howls."

C) "Orders given to commence excavating. Ireland came to the rescue; twenty 'sons of toil' with prehensile paws supplied them by nature with evident reference to the handling of the spade and the wielding of the pickaxe and congenital hollows on the shoulder wonderfully adapted to make the carrying of the hod a luxury instead of a labor."

D) "Met a Know-Nothing procession moving uptown, as I travelled down Broadway to the meeting; a most emphatic demonstration. Solid column, eight or ten abreast, and numbering some two or three thousand, mostly young men marching in quick time. They looked as if they might have designs on St. Patrick's Cathedral, and I think the Irish would have found them ugly customers."

E) "Yesterday morning I was a spectator of a strange, weird, painful scene. Seeing a crowd on the corner, I stopped and made my way to a front place. The earth had caved in a few minutes before and crushed the breath out of a pair of ill-starred Irish laborers. They had just been dug out, and lay white and stark on the ground. Around them were a few men and fifteen or twenty Irish women, wives, kinfolk or friends. The women were raising a wild, unearthly cry, half shriek and half song, wailing as a score of daylight Banshees. Now and then one of them would throw herself down on one of the corpses, or wipe some trace of defilement from the face of the dead man with her apron, slowly and carefully, and then resume her lament. It was an uncanny sound to hear. Our Irish fellow citizens are almost as remote from us in temperament and constitution as the Chinese."

### **Worksheet 3- Irish Immigrants in Philadelphia**

In 1844, there were riots in Philadelphia. Examine the picture, read the article and answer the questions.

1- What is shown in the picture?

2- In your opinion, are there examples of anti-Irish prejudice in these accounts of rioting in Philadelphia in 1844? Make a list and explain your views.

#### **A. In 1844, anti-immigrant groups in Philadelphia approved a three plank platform.**

1- An extension to twenty-one years of the waiting period for naturalization.

2- the election of none but native-born Americans to public office.

3- the rejection of foreign interference in the social, political and religious institutions of the country, especially the public schools.

#### **B. Groups circulated a flyer complaining about new immigrants to the United States.**

"The day must come, and, we fear, is not too far distant, when most of our offices will be held by foreigners -- men who have no sympathy with the spirit of our institutions, who have done aught to secure the blessings they enjoy, and instead of governing ourselves, we shall be governed by men, many of whom, but a few short years previously, scarcely knew of our existence."

#### **C. There were anti-Irish riots in the streets of Philadelphia. A company of Irish volunteer firefighters fought the rioters and one of the rioters died. An anti-immigrant organization issued this declaration:**

"The bloody hand of the Pope has stretched forth to our destruction. Now we call on our fellow-citizens, who regard free institutions, whether they be native or adopted, to arm. Our liberties are to be fought for -- let us not be slack in our preparation."

#### **D. The next day a fire set by anti-Irish rioters destroyed St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church and the Governor of Pennsylvania declared military rule (martial law). More than 2,000 state troops patrolled the streets of Philadelphia. The commanding officer announced:**

"Order must be restored, life and property rendered secure. The idle, the vicious, the disorderly must be curbed and taught to understand and respect the supremacy of the law and, if they do not take warning, on their own heads be the consequences."