

# Ideas on using Irish history with teenage EL learners

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ELT syllabuses in Ireland are required to include an Irish culture component (ACELS Regulations paragraph 2.3). History is one aspect of culture, but how to exploit it successfully? I will attempt to demonstrate some activities which I have found engaging with my occasional teenager classes.

## History quiz

Table quiz format. These questions for attendees as an example. For a fuller list for students please email [antopenston@gmail.com](mailto:antopenston@gmail.com)

### History Quiz

1. Who described O'Donovan Rossa as 'O'Donovan Assa'?  
a. Michael Davitt      b. Daniel O'Connell      c. Winston Churchill
2. Lough Derg (in Donegal) means 'red lake'. The reason (legendary) for its redness is that blood ran into the lake from its island, as a result of:  
a. Cuchulain killing a dog there.      b. St. Patrick slaying a dragon there.  
c. The human sacrifices being made there.
3. Reginald's Tower in Waterford was the first building in Ireland to be constructed using mortar. The contents of this mortar, common at the time, were: fur, mud, lime and...  
a. egg      b. beer      c. blood
4. This person always travelled with a locksmith and their own lock to be put on their bedroom door, such was their fear of being assassinated.  
a. Elizabeth I      b. Henry VIII      c. James II
5. What was Patrick Pearse's middle name:  
a. Henry      b. Harold      c. Herbert
6. What is the official number of survivors of the Spanish Armada remaining in Ireland?  
a. 8      b. 18      c. 80  
(ref.: *Ireland, Graveyard of the Spanish Armada* T.P. Kilfeather)

<b>S<sub>1</sub></b>	<b>G W</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>-- --</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>W R</b>	<b>S<sub>2</sub></b>	<b>H O C</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>F</b>
<b>Y</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>B S</b>	<b>G F A</b>

## 'Squarebusters'

(These questions for attendees as an example).

Best done on the (traditional) WB.

Review vocab. One team tries to connect horizontally, the other vertically. Phrasal verbs and other phrases which are easy to guess before the question is asked can be left in blanks, and in 'top left', 'bottom right' etc, position, for easy calling. T inserts the letters after the question is asked.

At the end, any cells leftover are called by the teacher; the S who gives the correct answer has their name put in that cell. Prize for the S whose name appears the most often.

**S<sub>1</sub>** The king who founded Christ Church Cathedral. ... He was Danish. (Sitric)

**GW** The type of hostilities engaged in by Michael Collins in the Irish War of Independence. (Guerilla warfare)

**T** This man said the Great Famine was a punishment from God for lazy people. (Trevalyan)

**F-I-L** When William of Orange fought against King James II at the Battle of the Boyne, he was fighting against his ... what relative...? (father-in-law)

**A** Strongbow married this lady, the daughter of the King of Leinster. (Aoife)

**WR** The person who first planted potatoes in Ireland. (Walter Raleigh)

**S<sub>2</sub>** This is what was done to the ship, the Aud, when it was captured in Bantry Bay. (scuttled)

**HOC** Parnell hated the colour green, which was unfortunate because this is the colour of the upholstery in this government place in London. (the House of Commons)

**G** The kind of boat that Granuaile used for her piracy. (galley)

**N** The occupation of the girl who delivered the surrender orders from Padraig Pearse to the other 1916 leaders. (nurse)

**C** Where, in Kilmainham Gaol, did Joseph Plunkett and Grace Gifford marry? (chapel)

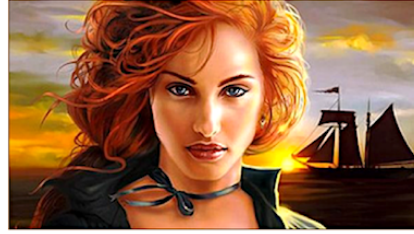
**F** William of Orange wasn't named after the fruit but a place in this country. (France)

**Y** Militia organized by local land owners loyal to the Crown (Yeomanry).

**K** A passage grave near Newgrange. (Knowth)

**BS** There were two BS's in Ireland, the first in Croke Park... the second in Derry. (Bloody Sunday)

**GFA** This, in 1998, marks the end of the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland. (Good Friday Agreement)



## 'Dictation race'

Unfortunately, small classrooms inhibit its use.

'Sliced reading' is another option.

Show/draw map of west of Ireland, draw arrows for directions of ships coming from Spain and north Africa to trade. Explain that the visiting boats had to pay taxes to pirates. Show pic of Granuaile.

Pre-teach *Deputy* (the Queen of England's representative in Dublin), *cattle*, *shotgun*, *hanged*.

1. Grace O'Malley is known as 'The Pirate Queen'. Her family controlled the west coast.
2. The O'Malleys collected taxes from ships that came up the coast from France and Spain.
3. Grace's father didn't let her come on his ships because she was a girl.
4. Grace cut her hair short and dressed as a boy. Then she got onto the ships.
5. When pirates from Tunisia tried to attack her boat she took her shotgun and fired at them.
6. Grace married twice, but her husbands were useless.
7. Grace had to defend her castle against the Queen's Deputy.
8. The Queen's Deputy took Grace's 1,000 cattle and had her brother hanged.
9. Grace went to O'Neill and promised to get Spanish soldiers to help him fight against the English.
10. Grace sailed over to London and asked Queen Elizabeth to stop the Deputy from fighting her.
11. The Queen ordered the Deputy to let Grace live in her old age. She died in her castle in 1603.

## **'Dictation race' for attendees**

This version with some Chinese words was used in the workshop to convey the difficulty some learners may experience.



- 1. Grace's jiating controlled the west coast.**
- 2. The O'Malleys collected shuishou.**
- 3. Grace's fuqin didn't let her come on his ships.**
- 4. She cut her toufa and dressed as a nanhai.**
- 5. Others tried to gongji her boat.**



Grace O'Malley is known as 'The Pirate Queen'. Her family/clan controlled the seas along the west of Ireland.

The O'Malley family's main 'territory' was the seas around Clew Bay, where they owned a number of ships and castles.

They collected taxes from ships which came up the coast from England, France and Spain.

As well as collecting taxes, they also sailed to Portugal and Spain, trading fish and cattle for wine and other goods.

Of course, all their income was not from the sea; they also carried out raids on land, stealing from other clans.

They would simply sail up the coast, land on a beach and raid farms and homes of enemy clans.

When Grace was a young girl she wanted to accompany her father on his ship, but he refused permission, saying he would not allow a girl on board.

This would not prevent Grace from trying, so she cut her hair and dressed as a boy.

When her father saw that she was as good as the other sailors, even beating them at playing cards, he allowed her to sail.

Eventually, she built up her own fleet, inheriting her father's when he died.

When pirates from Tunisia attacked her boat, she was the first to take her shotgun and fire at them.

Grace married twice, but her husbands were useless. Grace had to defend her main castle against the Queen's Deputy on her own.

In one confrontation, the Deputy took Grace's 1,000 cattle and killed her brother and some of his men.

Being angry with the Deputy for killing her brother, Grace went to O'Neill in the north of Ireland and promised to ship Spanish soldiers to help him fight against the English.

But Grace was wise enough not to join with O'Neill. After some time Grace sailed over to London and asked Queen Elizabeth to stop the Deputy from fighting her.

She was successful. The Queen ordered the Deputy to let Grace live in her old age. She died in her castle in 1603.

## 'Sliced reading'

This version was used as an example. It may be too long for some classes. Email me for an editable version.

When slicing, use a guillotine. If you use scissors, do an extra trim on some of the slips so as not to give away the joins.

Use different coloured card/laminated paper to prevent mix-ups.

Groups of three; but pairs may be better.  
Pre-teach *Clew Bay, clan, raid, fleet, shotgun*.

Check the first couple of 'correct' groups before showing/handing out the original text to all.

Award a prize to the first correct group.





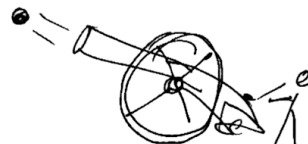


Images & video can raise interest and aid understanding, but most of class time should be dedicated to reading and activities.

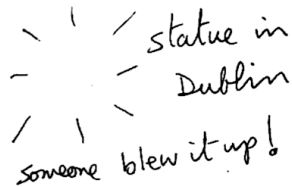


a battle

The battle of the Boyne

The battlefield is  
near Newgrange.

<u>James</u>	<u>William</u>
Soldiers: 24,000	36,000
	
a cannon	
Cannon: 12	19
Rifles: old	new
	 a bullet



## Drawing while talking – pre-reading

There's a reading piece in a coursebook on the Battle of Gettysburg, quite good with the usual matching and other pre-reading activities, but I decided on a more relevant battle, and did my usual pre-reading on the board, still including all the vocab in the coursebook lesson ('battlefield', 'blew it up', etc.)

Project images of the two kings and the Battle of the Boyne, possibly also Orange marches.

But the rest can be done in a more engaging way by miming 'soldier', 'rifle', and drawing the rest. (Pre-reading in coursebooks can be dry.)

Two teams guess the number of soldiers, cannon, rifles before these are included on the board or discovered by reading.



# PROJECT

**Ss go online and learn about a pilgrimage (or shrine).**

Groups of three (or pairs): artist, researcher/dictator, writer.

Each group given an A3 poster, pencil, markers (one thin for writing).

Assign a pilgrimage to each group (see list below).

(Perhaps also an A4/A5 sheet so one S can do the artwork separately while another writes in a designated area on the poster, the A4/A5 sheet to be attached later.)

## **Search for:**

- ☐ **General information, location, religion.**
- ☐ **Who is the famous holy person?**
- ☐ **When was the first pilgrimage there?**
- ☐ **Approximately, how many people go there?**
- ☐ **What do the people do?**
- ☐ **Any other interesting facts.**

**N. B. Draw something/someone relevant to the pilgrimage.**

Posters to be mounted on the walls. Ss circulate, read each and award marks.

**Marks awarded for:**

- 1. Interesting information.**
- 2. Good English.**
- 3. Neat writing, easily legible on the poster.**
- 4. Relevant, attractive artwork.**

- Camino de Santiago
- Tóchar Phádraig
- Kumbh Mela
- The Hajj
- Lourdes
- Shikoku
- Mount Kailash
- Madonna del Ghisallo

*If you know your history  
Then you would know where you coming from  
Then you wouldn't have to ask me  
Who the heck do I think I am.*  
Bob Marley



*"The longer you can look back,  
the farther you can look forward."*  
Winston Churchill

### **THANK YOU**

For copies of 'dictation race', 'sliced reading' and  
history quiz please email  
[antopenston@gmail.com](mailto:antopenston@gmail.com)