

Webquest: St Patrick's Day

by Karen Kovacs

Level: Intermediate +

Target age: Teenagers / Adults

Time needed: 90 minutes

Key skills: Reading, speaking

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student

Who was St Patrick? What is the history of St Patrick's Day? In this webquest, students will find the answers to these questions and learn about how 17 March is celebrated around the world.

Activity 1: Who was St Patrick?

Students visit <https://theconversation.com/10-things-to-know-about-the-real-st-patrick-92253> and read the article. In pairs, students should look for the answers to the questions and then compare answers with their classmates.

Key:

1. around 450 A.D., probably on the west coast (of England) around Bristol near the southern border of modern England and Wales
2. He was captured and sold as a slave
3. He prayed
4. sought a passage on a ship bound for Britain
5. a bishop
6. no, he was beaten, put in chains and extorted
7. they insulted him, tried to poison him and engaged him in magical duels
8. that Patrick used the Shamrock as a symbol of the Christian Trinity when he preached to the heathen Irish. This is false.
9. there were no snakes in pre-modern Ireland
10. St. Brigit and St. Columba; yes

Using the answers to questions 1–10 and the prompts, students should write a biography of St Patrick in their own words.

Activity 2: What is the history of St Patrick's Day?

Students visit www.thoughtco.com/history-of-the-st-patricks-day-parade-1773800 and read the article. They find the correct information to complete the sentences.

Key:

1. Boston, USA
2. 1737
3. drums
4. banquet
5. Great Famine
6. violence
7. 1890s
8. cities

Activity 3: St Patrick's Day traditions

St Patrick's Day is celebrated all over the world and is well known for a number of its traditions. Students use the following weblink to find the answers to the questions: <http://www.ireland-information.com/saintpatricksdaysymbols.htm>

Key:

1. 17th or 18th century
2. to illustrate the message of the Christian Holy Trinity and demonstrate their defiance of the British ruling class
3. blue
4. Irish soldiers serving in the British army
5. (over) 150,000
6. 5 days
7. the Chicago River
8. The Irish Parliament Building, the Sydney Opera House, the Empire State Building, Niagara Falls and the Pyramids of Giza
9. Beer or whiskey
10. 75 million
11. corned beef and cabbage

Students then summarize what they have learnt about St Patrick's Day symbols and traditions.

Activity 4: St Patrick's Day collage

This is a creative activity in which students can show how much they have learned and share that knowledge to express their own opinions. The most important aspect of the activity is not the development of the collage but the time spent sharing it and explaining it to their classmates. This opportunity to express their ideas is invaluable

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In this activity, students make a collage about St Patrick's Day, showing how they would like to celebrate it. They should search for images and accompany these with appropriate text. When they have completed their collage, they should share it with their classmates and explain why it represents their personal view of St Patrick's Day.

Extra activities

1. Students search the internet to find a free St Patrick's Day card to send to their friends, family or to you.
2. Students search for some traditional Irish recipes. They can compare them to traditional dishes in their own country and decide which of them they'd like to cook.
3. To find out more about St Patrick, students can visit the Saint Patrick Centre online: www.saintpatrickcentre.com. The centre offers an interpretative exhibition that tells the story of Ireland's patron saint.