

Webquest: St Patrick's Day

by Karen Kovacs

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

On 17 March, the whole world becomes Irish. It's the day we celebrate St Patrick's Day in honour of Ireland's patron saint. But who was St Patrick? And how do we celebrate his day?

Activity 1: Who was St Patrick?

Visit this site: <https://theconversation.com/10-things-to-know-about-the-real-st-patrick-92253>.

Read the article and look for the answers to these questions. Share your answers with your classmates.

1. Where and when was St Patrick born?
2. How did Patrick come to Ireland?
3. What did Patrick do whilst he was looking after sheep?
4. What did Patrick do on Ireland's east coast?
5. What new job did Patrick have when he returned to Ireland?
6. Was Patrick welcomed as he spread Christianity around Ireland?
7. What did the druids do to Patrick?
8. What are Catholic school children taught about the Shamrock and is this true or false?
9. Why could Patrick not have driven snakes out of Ireland?
10. What are the names of the other two saints of Ireland and were they born in Ireland?

Using your answers to questions 1–10 above, finish the biography about St Patrick below in your own words.

St Patrick was born in ... around ...

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

Visit this site: www.thoughtco.com/history-of-the-st-patricks-day-parade-1773800. Read the article, then complete the following sentences.

- The first recorded St Patrick's Day parade happened in _____ (1) in the year _____ (2).
- In New York, St Patrick's Day celebrations from 1784 onwards involved the playing of fifes and _____ (3) and a _____ (4) was held in Manhattan.
- In the 1800s, the Irish population of New York increased because of the _____ (5) so there were more St Patrick's Day celebrations.
- However, the newspapers reported stories of _____ (6) and so there were efforts to make the celebrations more respectable.
- The parade today has hardly changed since the _____ (7). Other American _____ (8), as well as Dublin in Ireland, now also hold large parades.

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. Visit the following site to find the answers to the questions below: <http://www.ireland-information.com/saintpatricksdaytraditions.htm>.

1. When did people first start wearing Shamrock to celebrate St. Patrick?
2. Why did Irish people use the Shamrock?
3. What colour was originally associated with St. Patrick?
4. Who held the first St. Patrick's Day parade?
5. How many people take part in the parade in New York?
6. For how many days is St. Patrick's Day now celebrated in Ireland?
7. Which river was first dyed green in 1962?
8. Which famous places have been coloured green to celebrate St. Patrick's Day?
9. What drinks are traditionally drunk on St. Patrick's Day?
10. How many extra pints of Guinness are drunk on St. Patrick's Day?
11. What traditional Irish food is often eaten on St. Patrick's Day?

Now, summarize for the class what you have learnt about St Patrick's Day symbols and traditions.

Activity 4: St Patrick's Day collage

Have you ever made a collage? Collage is an art form in which the artist takes a number of images and/or words and puts them together on a piece of paper, in a frame or on a screen.

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Usually, you cut and paste images and text from magazines, but you can also make collages on your computer. All you need is a word processing program, PowerPoint or a website builder (like Wix).

In this activity, you will make a collage about St Patrick's Day. How would you like to celebrate that day? Let your collage reflect how you would like to celebrate it.

Start by searching for images that you can include. Try searching [Google Images](#) for images related to St Patrick's Day, Ireland, leprechauns, shamrocks and anything else you feel might help you celebrate. When you see an image or read a sentence you like, save it on your computer. For images, just put the cursor over the image you are interested in and click with your right mouse button if you are using a PC or double click if you have a MAC. Choose 'Save' and decide where you want to save the image. For words or sentences, just select the text and copy it into a document in a word processing program.

As soon as you have a collection of images, open the program you will use to make your collage and paste images wherever you want on the page. You can also add text if you want. You can edit the images using a photo-editing program and you can edit the sentences in your word processing program (change the size, the font, the colour).

When you finish making your collage, share it with your classmates and explain why it represents your personal view of St Patrick's Day.

Extra activities

1. Search the internet to find a free St Patrick's Day card to send to your friends or teacher.
2. Do you like cooking? Search for some traditional Irish recipes. Are they very different from your country's dishes?
3. Would you like to know more about St Patrick? Visit the Saint Patrick Centre online: www.saintpatrickcentre.com. The Centre offers an interpretative exhibition that tells the story of Ireland's patron saint.