

## St. Patrick's Day

"Ireland is where strange tales begin and happy endings are possible."  
— Charles Haughey



### Warm up

- What do you know about St. Patrick's Day and Irish traditions?
- Why do you think St. Patrick's Day is so widely celebrated outside Ireland?
- What comes to mind when you hear "Irish traditions"? (e.g., music, folklore, symbols?)
- If you had to choose a "national holiday" for your own country, what traditions would it include?



### 1. In small groups, brainstorm and list words associated with Ireland.

Shamrock      Leprechaun      Guinness      Celtic  
 Emerald Isle      Irish Pub      St. Patrick      Dublin  
 Blarney Stone      Cliffs of Moher      Folk Music  
 Pot of Gold      Green      Riverdance      Gaelic  
 Whiskey      Luck      Cork      Harp      Rainbows  
 grass      Friendliness



## 2. Match the words below with their definitions.

- a. Revelry → 4
- b. Superstition → 5
- c. Emerald Isle → 7
- d. Parade float → 3
- e. Patron saint → 6
- f. Druid → 2
- g. Shamrock → 1

1. A three-leaf plant often associated with St. Patrick's teachings.
2. A person believed to have had magical or religious influence in ancient Celtic culture.
3. A large decorative platform used in parades.
4. Extravagant celebrations, often including music and dancing.
5. An irrational belief that certain actions or objects can bring good or bad luck.
6. A title given to a saint regarded as the special guardian or protector of a group or place.
7. A poetic nickname for Ireland, highlighting its lush green landscape.



## 3. Try to guess the answers to these questions. The correct answers will be revealed in the following text.

1. How much Guinness is typically consumed worldwide on St. Patrick's Day?  
A. *5 million pints*      B. ***13 million pints***      C. *20 million pints*
2. What is believed to have driven the snakes out of Ireland?  
A. *A sudden ice age*      B. ***St. Patrick's miracle***      C. *A volcanic eruption*
3. What colour was originally associated with St. Patrick?  
A. *Green*      B. ***Blue***      C. *Gold*
4. How long has the St. Patrick's Day parade been held in New York City?  
A. *Since the 1200s*      B. ***Since the 1700s***      C. *Since the 1900s*
5. What's the global economic impact of St. Patrick's Day?  
A. *\$2 billion*      B. *\$6 billion*      C. ***\$10 billion***

## St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day, celebrated annually on March 17th, is a holiday that blends history, myth, and festivity. While many associate the day with leprechauns, shamrocks, and parades, its origins offer a richer narrative.

St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was born in Roman Britain. As a teenager, he was kidnapped by Irish raiders and enslaved. After escaping, he returned to Ireland as a missionary, spreading Christianity across the island. Legend suggests that Patrick used the shamrock—a simple three-leaved plant—to explain the Christian concept of the Holy Trinity. Over time, his legacy grew, and March 17th, believed to be the date of his death, became a day of remembrance and celebration.

Interestingly, the colour originally associated with St. Patrick was blue, not green. Early depictions often show him wearing blue robes. The shift to green came later, influenced by Ireland's lush landscapes, the green stripe on the Irish flag, and the shamrock's symbolism. Another popular legend tells that St. Patrick drove all the snakes out of Ireland. However, historians note that post-glacial Ireland never had snakes, suggesting that the story is symbolic. It's believed that the "snakes" represent pagan beliefs, which Patrick "banished" through his missionary work.

The first St. Patrick's Day parade in New York City was held in 1762, making it one of the oldest civilian parades in the world. Today, the holiday has evolved into a global event marked by parades, music, dancing, and—of course—beer. It's estimated that around 13 million pints of Guinness are consumed worldwide every March 17th. From Dublin to Chicago, where the river is famously dyed green, the day has become a celebration of Irish culture and pride. Even in places like Tokyo and Buenos Aires, you'll find St. Patrick's Day parades.



The economic impact of St. Patrick's Day is significant. In the United States alone, consumers plan to spend a record \$7.2 billion on the holiday, with top spending categories being food and beverages. Globally, the holiday generates approximately \$10 billion in revenue, including tourism, merchandise, and hospitality sales. This substantial spending underscores the holiday's transformation into a major cultural and commercial event celebrated worldwide.



*Leprechaun*

No St. Patrick's Day would be complete without a few tall tales and superstitions. Some believe that wearing green keeps you safe from being pinched by mischievous leprechauns, while others insist it brings good luck. And then there's the playful tradition of "drowning the shamrock": placing a shamrock in your glass of whiskey, toasting to health, and then drinking it down. Whether you believe in the luck of the Irish or just enjoy the festivities, St. Patrick's Day is a time to let loose, have a laugh, and connect with a culture that knows how to keep its spirit alive.

 *How many quiz questions did you get right?*



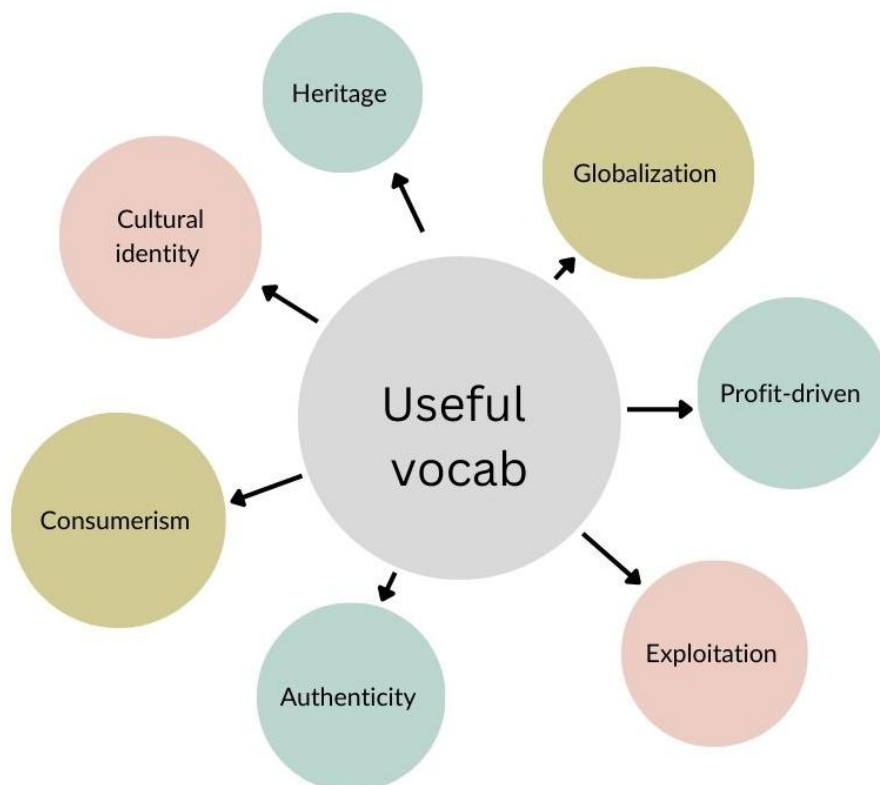
#### 4. Debate: Is St. Patrick's Day Over-Commercialized?

St. Patrick's Day has become nothing more than an excuse for excessive drinking and consumerism. Originally, it was a religious day of remembrance, but now it's all about parades, green beer, and marketing campaigns. Businesses profit while the historical and spiritual aspects fade into the background.

Commercialization has actually helped keep Irish traditions alive! Thanks to global celebrations, more people learn about Irish history and symbols like the shamrock. Countries like the U.S., Japan, and Argentina now recognize and celebrate Irish culture. Without commercialization, St. Patrick's Day might have faded into obscurity outside Ireland.

#### ◆ Debate & Argument Vocabulary:

- On the other hand... – To introduce a contrasting idea.
- While some may argue that... – A way to acknowledge the opposing side.
- From a historical perspective... – A phrase to introduce historical context.
- It could be argued that... – A useful debate phrase.
- However, one cannot ignore that... – To emphasize a strong point.

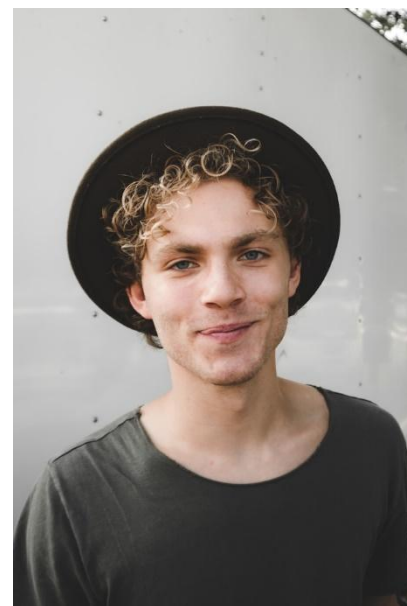




## 5. Read the text and answer the following comprehension questions.

As a wee bairn from the south of Ireland, I've always known that our country is more than just St. Patrick's Day, Guinness, and leprechauns. While we do love a good pint, it's no secret that hearing about little men in green suits from tourists can get a tad old. The fun is in sharing the real stories and rich history that make this land so wonderfully unique.

Now, Guinness—there's an art to it. A regular pint of lager is served in just a few seconds—quick and straightforward. But a pint of Guinness? Now that's a different story. It takes about two minutes to pour a perfect pint, allowing the creamy head to settle into just the right consistency. Rushing this process is a major faux pas; try it, and the bartender will likely give you a gentle lecture on the sacred art of pouring Guinness. So, take a seat, enjoy the conversation, and wait for that perfect pour. And while you're at the pub, remember: buying a round is the quickest way to make new friends. Everyone takes turns, and skipping your round is one of the worst missteps you can make.



*Aiden Duffy*

Oh, and before I go any further, let me explain a bit of local lingo: the word “craic” (pronounced “crack”) simply means fun, lively conversation, and a good time. You'll hear it everywhere in Ireland—it's a cornerstone of our social life and something you really need to know before you visit.



We're called the Emerald Isle for good reason—those rolling green hills are no myth. If you're planning a road trip, you won't want to miss the Cliffs of Moher, where the Atlantic batters against ancient rock, creating breathtaking views. And speaking of road trips, the Wild Atlantic Way and the Ring of Kerry should definitely be on your list. Winding through scenic villages, these routes offer moments that make you wonder, "Is this place even real?" Rest assured, this natural beauty is as genuine as it gets.

By the way, when I say I'm from Ireland, I mean the Republic of Ireland—the part that's proudly part of the EU. Northern Ireland is in the UK, and it's important to get that difference right because we have our own distinctive history, charm, and pride.

From ancient ruins to our lively pubs, it's clear that Ireland's heritage runs far deeper than St. Patrick's Day. So come for the Guinness, stay for the craic, and open yourselves to the many unexpected and unforgettable layers of Ireland.

- a. The text opens with “As a wee bairn from the south of Ireland.” What do you think “wee bairn” means, and how does its use shape your perception of the narrator and set the tone of the text? *“Wee bairn” means a small child. Its use gives the narrator a warm, informal, and distinctly Irish voice, setting a friendly and personal tone.*
- b. What does the speaker mean by “the sacred art of pouring Guinness,” and how does this contrast with the way a regular pint of lager is served? *“The sacred art of pouring Guinness” refers to the careful, patient process required to serve a perfect pint—taking about two minutes—unlike the quick pour of a regular lager.*
- c. How is the word “craic” defined in the text, and why is it considered a cornerstone of Irish social life? *“Craic” is defined as fun, lively conversation, and a good time. It’s a cornerstone of Irish social life because it captures the essence of the country’s friendly and communal spirit.*
- d. Which natural landmarks and road trip routes are mentioned, and what characteristics make them unique according to the text? *The text mentions the Cliffs of Moher, the Wild Atlantic Way, and the Ring of Kerry. These are unique for their dramatic landscapes, breathtaking views, and the enchanting, almost otherworldly beauty of Ireland.*
- e. How does the speaker differentiate between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, and why is this distinction important? *The speaker differentiates by stating that he is from the Republic of Ireland (part of the EU), while Northern Ireland is in the UK. This distinction is important as it underscores different histories, identities, and cultural pride.*



## 6. Discuss

Which aspect of Irish culture described in the text (e.g., the art of pouring Guinness, the importance of buying rounds, the scenic road trips) do you find most appealing, and why?

The text introduces “craic” as essential Irish lingo. How might knowing local expressions enhance a visitor’s experience and help them connect with locals?

The speaker mentions that tourists talking about leprechauns can get old. In your opinion, how do stereotypes affect the way visitors experience Irish culture?

How do you think the tradition of buying rounds at pubs influences social interactions in Ireland? Can you compare it to any similar custom in your own culture?



7. Design a 4-day road trip itinerary in Ireland, detailing destinations, activities, meals, and cultural experiences.

*Keep in mind: Historical sites, natural landmarks, culture, local cuisine, festivals or events*

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4