



The Kids' Guide to Ireland

OBJECTIVE: Read a travel guide to Ireland in honor of St. Patrick's Day.

STANDARDS: Social Studies (NCSS): Culture; people, places, and environments

“Legend says that leprechauns are tiny men who hide treasures in pots.”

BEFORE READING

Build Background

Build background about Ireland and discuss the purpose of travel guides.

Use a map or globe in your classroom to show children the country of Ireland. Then ask, “If you were planning a trip to Ireland, how would you decide what to see and do?” Explain that people use books called **travel guides** to plan trips. Today, children will read a travel guide for Ireland just in time for St. Patrick's Day.

DURING READING

Use Maps

Help children use the issue's map features to locate areas in the country.

Pause at page 2 and ask, “What does the map show you?” (*the location of Dublin*) Repeat the question for the map on each page, having children point to the location. Help children to make comparisons using the maps. For instance, ask, “Which is closer to the bottom (or southern) end of Ireland: Trim or Blarney?” (*Blarney*)

AFTER READING

Apply Knowledge

Invite children to share ideas for a travel guide of their own town or city.

Review that the travel guide to Ireland gives information about important places to go. It also lists things visitors should see to learn more about the country. Ask, “What would be important to include in a guide of our town or city? What could visitors see to learn more about life here?” Lead children to suggest any important landmarks or activities that reveal local culture. For instance, if you live in a big city, visitors might go to the top of a major skyscraper; if you live in a rural community, they might visit a farm or orchard.

READ-ALoud BACKGROUND

More About the Emerald Isle

- One nickname for Ireland is the “Emerald Isle.” *Isle* is short for island. Why emerald? Because emeralds are green, of course! Ireland is known for its beautiful green countryside.
- What makes Ireland so green? Ireland gets a lot of wet weather. All that rain helps plants grow.
- Most people in Ireland speak English. But Ireland also has its own language—it's called **Gaelic**.

The Luck of the Irish

- According to Irish tradition, a four-leaf clover means good luck. Clovers are small green plants (also called **shamrocks**) that usually have only three leaves. But sometimes you can find one with four leaves.
- Legend says that **leprechauns** are tiny men who hide their treasure in pots. If you follow a leprechaun to the end of the rainbow, you could find a pot of gold!
- Horseshoes are also thought to bring good luck. If you get a horseshoe as a gift, you should hang it like a *U*. If you hang it the other way, the good luck might drip out of the horseshoe.

Celebrating St. Patrick's Day

- In Ireland, St. Patrick's Day is a national holiday. Many people wear shamrocks. Some girls and women wear green ribbons in their hair. In Dublin, the parade is part of a five-day festival that also includes carnivals and a treasure hunt!
- People in America celebrate St. Patrick's Day too. Many cities have parades. People play traditional Irish music on an instrument called a **bagpipe**. They also do a traditional Irish dance called the **jig**. In Chicago, a whole river is turned green with dye! But don't worry—it doesn't hurt the fish.